

# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1901.

## PRINCESS PUCK.

### CHAPTER I.

It was in March that Bill Alardy went to Ashelton. She was sent there "to grow up," Polly said, and added some sceptical remarks with regard to both place and person. "Poor little Wilhelmina," said Miss Brownlow, "she has never had a fair chance among us all; the best possible thing for her would be to go to Ashelton with Theresa." And Miss Brownlow should have known, for she was acquainted with Ashelton, and even better acquainted with Bill, having had the doubtful pleasure of her charge and company from early childhood. Polly did not know much about Ashelton; she had only been there once to spend the day with Theresa, which was a grievance in itself, for Theresa had lived there ever since her marriage last June. That, however, was beside the point; Polly did not so much base her doubts of the efficacy of the plan on Ashelton as on Bill, and she had known her as long as Miss Brownlow, for she was the eldest, as Bill was the youngest, of the four nieces Miss Brownlow had taken into her household. Polly's opinion and Miss Brownlow's were not identical on the subject of Bill; but when the matter of the going to Ashelton was being discussed Polly did not consider it necessary to give undue prominence to the difference,

thinking Bill might as well go even if it did her no good.

It was a Monday evening when the plan was first mentioned, and Miss Brownlow was making up her accounts at the time. She always made up her accounts on Monday evenings. In her opinion there was no other time half so satisfactory, because, as she said, there was Sunday just before, and it was so easy to remember forgotten things on a Sunday. Perhaps it was not right to think of such things then, and of course she never did so on purpose, only one cannot help things flashing across one's mind. Occasionally the things flashed away again before she had time to secure them on Monday evening; occasionally also, the flashes were delusive and baseless; but on the other hand, sometimes they did chance to be correct, and then it was most satisfactory. This did not make any material difference to Miss Brownlow's accounts, which never by any chance came right; they never had come right since she first began keeping them in her girlhood, more years ago than she ever mentioned.

"My father always insisted on our keeping an account of our money, and how we spent it," she used to say to her nieces. "It is an excellent plan, my dears, for then you know where you are and how you stand." These desirable results did not always occur

in her own case, though that did not deter her nieces from following the suggestion, each according to her nature,—Theresa with neatness and some success, Bella with results not unlike her aunt's, Polly—there were commercial instincts in Polly's blood and her untidy books were kept with an accuracy which might have savoured of sharp practice to any one who could comprehend them. Bill, of course, was too young to be considered, and too penniless to keep a record of her non-existent income; moreover, she was only "Poor little Bill—Wilhelmina"—Miss Brownlow invariably made the correction in mind and sometimes in speech. She sighed as she thought about the girl,—she had just come to the item *one shilling, a bottle of Stephens's blue-black writing-ink*. Bill had on Thursday upset the last bottle on the school-room-floor, in class, too, with all the little girls looking on. How they giggled! Polly said afterwards that Bill made them, but Miss Brownlow did not think so. Bill was too old to do anything so wrong; she was seventeen now, though she seemed such a child. Polly, who was perhaps not without authority on the subject, was of opinion that age had little to do with iniquity, but Miss Brownlow was not convinced. In any case she had to pay the shilling for another bottle of ink. The column of figures she was now counting up did not come to the total she expected: "Now what have I forgotten?" she said.

Bella and Theresa glanced up but did not hazard a suggestion; they knew the remark was not addressed to them, and they went on correcting French exercises in silence. These French exercises were really Bella's work, but Theresa was helping her with them to-night. A year ago they were Theresa's own, but when she

married her sister had taken up that part of her work. Theresa was on a visit to Miss Brownlow, and finding herself back among the familiar surroundings it came quite natural to her to take up some part of the old duties; besides, she liked to help Bella.

As the two tall sisters sat close together, sharing the same dictionary and sometimes bending over the same page, Miss Brownlow thought they made a beautiful picture; possibly even a less prejudiced observer might not have entirely disagreed. Polly was certainly not a prejudiced observer, yet even she admitted the sisters' beauty in a general way. She did not look in their direction now, for she was busy with her needlework. She sat opposite to Miss Brownlow, close to the lamp, her dressmaking scattered around her. She possessed a perfect genius for what is technically known as "doing up" her clothes; consequently some of them were always undergoing alterations and repairs, and none of them kept the same appearance for long together.

"I cannot account for sixpence," Miss Brownlow said at last; "on what can I have spent sixpence?"

"Cabbages," Polly said briefly.

"Cabbages! My dear Polly, one cannot buy cabbages at this time of year, nor hardly anything else either; vegetables are so dear and scarce, it is really quite dreadful."

"Sweep," was Polly's only comment.

But it was not the sweep, Miss Brownlow said. "We have not had him this fortnight past," she declared. "Don't you remember, the last—"

"Then we ought to have had."

"Oh, I am sure we do not need him yet, don't you remember the last time he came—"

Polly did not remember and she showed no interest in the reminiscence; but Theresa, who did not like

to hear Miss Brownlow treated so cavalierly, encouraged her aunt to describe the last coming of the sweep and the delinquencies of the maid-servant who overslept herself on that occasion. "And I really do believe he would never have got in at all if it had not been for Bill; she heard him ringing and went down and let him in,—in her nightdress too!"

"That sixpence is for mending Bill's boots." This was Polly's remark.

"What a memory you have!" Miss Brownlow exclaimed, and Polly showed signs of remembering the incident of the sweep. "Bill did go down to him," she said, "in her nightdress and *nothing else*. I should like to know how long she stopped down with him!"

Polly had a habit of talking in italics; her treatment of the English language made it acquire an almost double value, her intonation giving the words an additional worth and meaning. Her last speech was an admirable example of her methods; there were many more things implied in it than were said. It was the implications which made Bella exclaim, "You are hard on the child."

"Oh, well!" And Polly shrugged her shoulders and bent over her work again.

"Poor little Bill, poor little Wilhelmina!" Miss Brownlow sighed softly.

Polly sniffed and Theresa asked: "How much longer are you going to let her be in the school?"

"Oh, a long time," Miss Brownlow answered readily; she had not begun to contemplate the problem of Bill's future, nor even to admit its existence. Polly knew that and her small dark eyes showed that she knew it as she remarked: "I began to teach the little ones before I was seventeen."

Miss Brownlow looked distressed,

but Bella said cheerfully: "That was long ago; Auntie wanted help then. Now it is quite different; if Bill were ever so able to teach there would not be the slightest need for her to do it; in fact I don't see whom she would teach."

This speech, though perhaps hardly likely to fulfil its comforting intention, was unfortunately only too true. It was indisputable that Miss Brownlow's school was not what it had been, that its best days lay behind it. At one time it had been almost an Establishment, the recognised school of Wrugglesby, the place to which the country clergymen and gentlemen-farmers of the surrounding districts sent their daughters. The boarders were so many then that it had been necessary to have a *mademoiselle* and a visiting English governess. That was some time ago, but even when Theresa first began to help with the teaching, things were more prosperous than they were now. Gradually they had changed; times had changed, boarders had fallen off one by one, new ones did not come; girls went farther now,—to Brighton, to Bournemouth, even to France and Germany. *Mademoiselle* left, and it hardly seemed necessary to fill her place, for Theresa was a very good French scholar. The English governess married, and Bella was found equal to doing all that was left of her work. Then, rather more than a year ago, Theresa married, and though Miss Brownlow talked of finding some nice well-educated girl to fill her place, nothing came of it. Theresa used to take the elder girls, and they were so few now that Bella could quite well help Miss Brownlow with them, especially as she was rather clever; she had passed the Cambridge Local Examination and attended some history lectures. Polly, of course, still taught the little ones; she always

had done so, and had always contrived to drill a certain amount of information into them. It is to be feared that she did not know very much herself; even Miss Brownlow was obliged to admit that; yet she possessed a far greater faculty for teaching than did the more accomplished Bella. As the school was chiefly composed of little girls, it really was important that they should be well taught. Sometimes Miss Brownlow felt a passing regret when she saw them struggling for their overshoes in the lobby; they were not what her old pupils had been, not of the same social position, not of the same age; most of them were "reductions" on account of sisters past, present, or to come; none of them were likely to remain any length of time, none of them were even weekly boarders. There were only two boarders besides Wilhelmina, who could hardly be counted since she belonged to the household.

Miss Wilson, the principal of the High School two stations up the line, thought of Miss Brownlow when, in her able paper on the education of girls, she had written of teachers of the past. Miss Brownlow was of the past, not highly educated, not clever, but kindly, simple, pleasant, well loved by those pupils of long ago, a gentle power for good in those past best days,—and in the present? Ah, well, the school was going; there were no boarders to be influenced one way or the other now, and the little girls who came daily did not trouble about Miss Brownlow. She was of a race of schoolmistresses fast disappearing from the earth, vanishing under the inexorable law of the survival of the fittest. She was not the fittest. Inefficient? Yes, that was it; inefficient for modern needs, modern wants; growing old, just a little past the work she once did, not at all fit for the

work now to be done; never a very wise woman, thank God, not wise enough to know that she was a failure.

"Wilhelmina will teach somewhere else," Miss Brownlow said, after she had mentally reviewed the prospect called up by Bella's words; and mercifully the prospect she reviewed was not quite that which other people saw.

"Where?" Polly asked casually, as if the matter were of small moment.

Miss Brownlow did not know. She had not thought, and the question was embarrassing.

Bella came to the rescue. "Mrs. Caxton will want a governess if her little girls are leaving at Easter. They are leaving because they always catch colds from the other children, so she is sure to want a governess."

"Yes, of course," Miss Brownlow said enthusiastically; "it would be the very thing for Bill; she never has a cold."

"H'm! What is she to teach? How not to catch cold? It is about the only thing she knows, and she does that by accident."

"They are so young," Miss Brownlow went on, delighted with the plan and regardless of Polly's interruption; "they will only want elementary teaching, reading and writing and spelling."

"Bill can't spell, not that that matters so very much though"—Polly perhaps knew by experience that it was possible to teach a subject in which you were not very deeply learned. "It certainly would not matter to Bill, nothing would matter. If she could spell every word in the dictionary, do you suppose any one would have her for a governess?"

"I don't know why not,—when she is a little older of course. She is such a child yet; wait till she is grown up."

"We have been waiting," Polly observed grimly.



"She is very young for her age; I am sure I don't know how it is."

"She was born without gumption," said Polly with conviction, "and she has never been able to acquire any general knowledge."

"She is not clever," Miss Brownlow admitted sadly.

"Cleverness has nothing to do with it," Polly retorted. "If you start in life lacking what Bill lacks, you must do what you can with common-sense. That will teach you a few things,—what not to say and how to say it, and—and all that. Bill has no common-sense."

"We have always treated her like a child;" and here Miss Brownlow sighed again.

It was then that Theresa suggested that Bill should come home with her to stay at Ashelton for a little while. Miss Brownlow was delighted with the suggestion; it was just the thing, she was sure. No doubt the girl would develop; Theresa would use her influence, and her young cousin had always been so fond of her, had always respected and admired her so much; such a visit would be the best possible thing. Theresa herself did not anticipate very great results, but she promised to do her best, and after some discussion of details regarding the proposed visit, Miss Brownlow returned to her accounts and the sisters to the exercises, interrupted only now and again by a repetition of the elder lady's satisfaction with the plan. After the third interruption Polly yawned aggressively. When there was silence again she bit her cotton and looked thoughtfully across at Miss Brownlow, at the kindly face, the thin hair, the black stuff gown she knew so well. She did not approve of the whole effect; she thought it "snuffy," and as such unlikely to create a favourable impression on the parents of possible scholars. She

looked beyond Miss Brownlow to the wall behind,—to the pale-toned paper with faint gold lines and fainter grey flowers, to the old-fashioned water-colours in shabby gilt frames, the white marble mantel-piece with red glass candlesticks upon it, and to the rosewood chairs covered with green rep, standing one on either side of the fire-place. The room was no more attractive than Miss Brownlow's dress, she thought; it was terribly old-fashioned in comparison with Miss Wilson's flatted walls and artistic green cushions. Polly had a poor opinion of art-colours, but she seriously considered the advisability of draping some of the household gods with the best of the shades of yellow. She was, in her own mind, reckoning the quantity of material necessary, when Miss Brownlow again broke in on her reflections.

"Are you sure Robert won't mind?" she asked for the fourth time.

"Quite sure," was Theresa's answer.

"That's all right; I should not like to put him about at all. You are quite certain?"

Theresa was quite certain, and the subject was dismissed. Polly breathed a heavy sigh, and once more fell back on her own thoughts. These now turned from the art-materials to Robert Morton, Theresa's husband. Polly had not a very high opinion of Robert Morton; she liked him well enough, but considered him a bad speculation. "He'll die of apoplexy—poor Theresa—I'm sorry for that poor girl. He'll certainly die of it, and I expect he'll die young." So she had once said to the indignant Bella, and she thought of the verdict again this evening as she glanced at the sisters and mentally dressed Theresa in widow's weeds. She would make a handsome widow, though perhaps not so effective as Bella. Polly glanced meditatively at Bella; a widow's cap

would look well on that golden head. Theresa was darker, and older too by nearly four years; she would be twenty-six in the summer and she looked her age; in fact, Theresa was almost too dignified. Bella was not dignified, though she was tall. They were both tall and graceful and clear-skinned; both had blue eyes, Theresa's grave and sweet, Bella's holy, innocent, suggesting a madonna's eyes to the observer until he became aware of the turned-up nose between; "a flirt's nose," Polly called it. Theresa's features were better though less attractive; she had not a flirt's nose, but also she had no tantalising dimple in her chin. Still they were both undeniably beauties, and Polly was nothing of the sort.

## CHAPTER II.

THERESA and Bella Waring were beauties when they came to Miss Brownlow's seven years ago, well-educated, well-informed, used to the ways of society (of small professional society), and possessed of sixty pounds a year between them. Their father had been dead some years then; it was their mother's death which sent them and their sixty pounds to Langford House. Theresa came to help with the teaching, Bella to finish her education first, and afterwards to fill her sister's place. Of course Miss Brownlow received them gladly, loved them warmly, mothered them to the best of her ability. She would have done that for any number of nieces, and she did it heartily for these four. Polly felt angry as she thought of their numbers, and thought contemptuously of the Brownlow family and its faculty for dying. There had been five Miss Brownlows originally; one died young, three married first and then died at their earliest convenience, leaving their children as a

legacy to the remaining sister who neither married nor died. She, possessed of short views, a large heart, and an inexhaustible supply of hope, welcomed them with open arms. Two of them she had to adopt entirely; the other two, Theresa and Bella, came to her better endowed, better equipped, and at a more convenient age.

And what had they done with their advantages? Polly put the case to herself with contemptuous irritation. Bella, so she summed it up, Bella at twenty-two had done nothing; Theresa at twenty-six had contrived to marry a small farmer. No doubt his family had originally been good, but one cannot live on a good family, especially if it is all but extinct; and the goodness did not prevent Robert from being a farmer in a small way, and an unsuccessful one too. He was undoubtedly a poor speculator: his tastes were expensive, his inclinations horsey, his income small, his tendencies apoplectic; he would soon, no doubt, die, and die suddenly, leaving Theresa no better off than she was a year ago. Really these two girls were stupid, as stupid as the Brownlow family. And yet their mother had been the best of the five sisters, according to all accounts; the strongest as well as the prettiest, for she had managed to live to quite a respectable age. Possibly her daughters were like her; they were sensible enough for any ordinary occasion but they were not, in Polly's opinion, able to take advantage of adverse circumstances. "They would die off easily," she thought, "and they haven't an idea between them worth mentioning."

Polly was not like the Brownlow family. She took after her father, a dubious advantage, and she flattered herself that she had ideas worth,—well, something, although perhaps they were not always quite suitable

for public mention. She also had an easy conscience, and in her youth some little acquaintance with social byways. She had a tenacious hold on life, and was not likely to follow her mother's and aunts' example and die easily. "So has Bill," she thought; "she is silly and she is ugly, but she won't fade out of the world in a hurry, though I can't see what good she will ever be in it."

This last sentiment found something like an echo, albeit unexpressed, in the minds of two other inmates of Langford House, the two boarders Carrie and Alice. They were quiet, inoffensive girls, a year or two younger than Bill, and forced by circumstances to have more of her company than they desired. The greater part of the day the three were together, and for the night they shared one room so that the sisters' nocturnal confidences had to be held in common with their companion. It must be admitted that Carrie and Alice did not altogether like Bill, though they felt a sort of superior pity for her which was not all unpleasant. On the evening when Miss Brownlow and her nieces were planning Bill's future good, Carrie and Alice were giving her a little advice while going to bed. It was on the subject of hair-dressing, Carrie thinking it was time Bill coiled her hair on the top of her head.

"It's quite time," she concluded. "Are you going to wait till you are eighteen? When are you going to do it up?"

Bill considered: "To-morrow," she said at last.

"To-morrow?" Carrie repeated, and Alice added: "You can't, you haven't got any hairpins."

"I'll get some of Bella's."

"You can't," Carrie said again, and turning to the glass began to arrange her own hair.

"Miss Waring has gold-coloured hairpins," Alice remarked; "you could not use them."

"Why not?"

"Because it would look horrid to have brass hairpins sticking out of your hair."

"Is that all?" Bill did not seem impressed.

Carrie turned away from the glass. "That is how I shall do my hair," she said. "I shall do it up the day I leave school, the very day."

"I like plaits better," Alice observed; but Bill examined the head-dress thoughtfully, and then asked: "And what else will you do when you leave school,—besides your hair, I mean?"

"Besides my hair? How ridiculous you are!" Carrie did not seem displeased by the question. She condescended to answer it rather fully, and as she took off her shoes and stockings talked of the possibilities of evening parties, the certainty of afternoon calls, the charms of long dresses, and of the young men who stayed at the Rectory. Alice joined in this explanation, and in fact the sisters were soon talking to and for each other only, having almost forgotten Bill's presence until she exclaimed suddenly: "Men! It's all men! Why are they nicer than women?"

She was sitting on her pillow in her favourite position, her knees drawn up, her elbows resting upon them and her chin framed in her hands; she was looking straight in front of her and only turned her eyes on the sisters when she spoke. They objected to her method of looking round without turning her head; that, in addition to the impropriety of the remark, made Carrie answer severely: "Men are not nicer than women; nobody thinks so except those who are fast."

"Yes, they are nicer. You think

so, Polly thinks so, Bella thinks so, every girl thinks so, though I don't see why."

"You don't know any men;" this was said with great contempt.

"No, nor any girls either, except you two, and you are nice!" Bill had an enormous mouth and the beginning of a smile curved it as she spoke.

"Then it is more than you are," Alice retorted with irritation, "or you would not talk about men like that."

"Men aren't half so amusing as women," Bill went on, ignoring the last speech; "and women aren't half so amusing when men are there. I can't see where the attraction comes in with any of them—the rector, the curates, the masters at the grammar-school, Robert Morton, any of them."

"Of course they don't take any notice of you," Carrie said, and Alice added: "You only think about people being amusing; you like people whom you can imitate."

"That's why I like you," Bill said sweetly. "Why do you like people—men?"

"I don't like men; you have never heard me speak of them!"

"Heard!" Bill laughed. "I have felt; I have felt you crinkle up for a boy!"

"You haven't! How dare you say such things!"

"Why not? Where is the harm? You talk about men to each other, why not to me? You never have before, but I see no reason why you should not. Do you consider it wrong to like men? How queer it is; you all like men and you all pretend you do not. There is a deal of humbug about it."

"Some people," Carrie said with severity, "have a sense of decency."

"A sense of decency! That's what Adam and Eve had when they hid

themselves; a sense of decency often seems to mean hiding something."

"You are very wicked!" Alice said scandalised, and would have nothing more to say to Bill for some time, though after the light was out and all three were in bed the sisters continued to talk to each other about the wonderful future, the first ball Carrie would attend, and the events that would follow.

"And after that," came the voice from Bill's bed,—*"what are you going to do after that?"*

"Oh, I don't know," Carrie answered; *"marry I suppose. There is a use for your despised men; you can't marry without them."*

"Marry—h'm!—Yes, I expect you will marry."

"Do you really think so? I don't know—and yet,—yes, I suppose I should rather like to; not yet of course, but by and by, to marry and to have several children."

"Oh, you are sure to; you are like the old white hen with feathers down her legs; you would make a splendid sitter."

"Bill!"

"Now what's the matter? Is it the sense of decency again?"

But the sisters would not answer her question and, having told her so, went on to say that, as it was forbidden to talk after the light was out, they were not going to do it any more, especially to her. Then they went to sleep, leaving Bill to her own reflections. She, thus left, rolled over on her back and lay staring up into the darkness above her and thinking. At her age one does not always think with a definite coherent clearness; dreaming is more to the mind of seventeen. Bill dreamed, fancies and thoughts flitting to and fro in her mind.

About marriage, for instance; last year Theresa had tried the great ex-

periment to which Carrie looked forward. Carrie would try it by and by; she would become Mrs. Somebody and grow staid and stout and placid; she would talk about "my house" and "my husband"; she would bound the universe, almost the Kingdom of Heaven by those two; she would wear a black silk dress and a heavy gold chain like Mrs. Bodling; she would get fatter and fairer and calmer; she would entirely lose sight of her feet——

Bill stretched out her own feet, and then lay still to listen. The wind crept in at the open window and stirred the curtains; the cloth on the toilet-table flapped idly, reminding her of quiet, slumberous summer afternoons, of a certain Thursday afternoon in June especially,—it was in June that Theresa had entered on the great experiment. In the first freshness of early summer she left the school and the old routine-work and the narrow, cosy, feminine life and went out to try a wider, fuller, new life. She was to have a house of her own and a servant; there had been a lot of talk about the house (here Bill built an ideal house for herself), a lot of things to be bought, a lot of new clothes for Theresa. Miss Brownlow and the girls had pinched and scraped and worked; Bill had been allowed to help a little, though her work was more strong than neat. Evening after evening Bella and Polly and Theresa had sat at work with Miss Brownlow—how they seemed to enjoy it! Theresa must have missed that when she went to her new home; Bill wondered what she did during those first evenings of the new life. Then the great day had come; Bill recalled every detail of it. There had been excitement and bustle and people and flowers, Theresa in her bridal gown, and

everywhere the scent of the little white roses—the white roses which made Bill think of funerals, though she did not know why.

Then Theresa had gone away. She kissed them all and cried, and smiled and cried again, and went. Robert Morton looked rather cross during the kissing and crying, but nobody seemed to mind. They were quite sure Theresa was happy, quite sure she had attained to all that she desired; only Bill thought she must be very lonely. She had also an inward conviction, founded on nothing, that Theresa would be desperately disappointed in her venture. There was no reason for these thoughts, and Theresa had said nothing to suggest them; she seemed happy, and they all thought her so except Bill, and Bill was so childish that she could not be expected to know anything about the matter. She had only once been to Theresa's home at Ashelton. They had all driven there one September day and enjoyed it greatly. Bill could recall every detail of the expedition, her memory was vivid and her experiences few. She had never been again to Ashelton; she had never been on a visit——

She was growing very sleepy now, and her thoughts became confused with the words of the cousins who were speaking just outside the door.

"I shall be very glad to have her."

"You will be more glad to be rid of her; besides, she has no clothes."

At the Day of Judgment Polly would still be considering her clothes—she would probably want to let out her garment of righteousness if—but sleep mastered Bill here.

### CHAPTER III.

It was September,—rich September, with its warm lights and red shadows—when Bill went first to Haylands,

Robert Morton's farm. It was March when she went again; a grey afternoon, level light, and dead stillness over the bare ploughed land and the low white house. She drove from Wrugglesby with Theresa, a tedious drive along winding lanes,—not that she found it tedious, for nothing was tedious to Bill. Theresa, too, had enjoyed her homeward journey more than usual. She had talked gaily all the way until they turned in at her own gateway; then somehow her spirits flagged, and in silence they drove up the long chase which meandered across a grassy field, passed a duck-pond where grey geese waded, and so on to the little gate which shut in the overgrown garden. Bill looked quickly at the garden. It had been a flowery, weedy wilderness when she was there in September; it was bare now, so d y that the earth rose in dust at the touch of Theresa's skirts, so bare that the leafless raspberry canes, still though they were, seemed to shiver in their nakedness.

There was no one about; Robert, no doubt, was busy somewhere on the farm. For a moment Theresa hesitated with the reins in her hand, then a man appeared from the stables and took the pony away. Theresa led the way into the house covertly casting an anxious glance at Bill.

"It is very cold," she said, as she pushed open the door of her favourite room and went to the fire.

"Yes, I suppose it is," Bill answered cheerfully. "I'm not cold though. What a jolly room! It is cubby, T.!"

"Do you like it? You saw it when you were here before," Theresa said, feeling somehow a little warmer and very glad that Bill was with her. If it had been Polly or Bella they might have thought Robert neglectful, but as it was only Bill it did not matter.

By and bye Robert came in. He did not know that Bill was coming

back with his wife and when the guest was safely shut in her room he asked, "Why on earth did you bring her?"

"Do you mind?" Theresa asked in distress. "I am sorry; I did not think you would mind; she won't trouble you much."

"No, she won't trouble me; still I don't see what you wanted to have her for."

"We thought—I thought, it might do her good."

"Ill?" Morton asked looking up sharply. "If she is ill, we certainly don't want her here."

"She is not ill. She does not get on very well at school; I mean—" Theresa felt the matter was difficult of explanation—"I mean, she is very young for her age."

"She is very ugly," Morton said, beginning to unlace his boots.

Theresa flushed. "She is my cousin," she said.

"That don't make her handsome, my dear," he observed without looking up.

"I don't think her at all ugly." Theresa's voice showed that she was hurt. "If she were, it would not be her fault. Do you wish me to send her home at the end of the week?"

"I? No, please yourself as to that. Keep her as long as you like, as far as I am concerned."

And he left her to take his boots to the wash-house with no idea that there were tears in her eyes. She forced them back, turning to the fire as she did so. It was certainly cold, a dreary, dreary afternoon. She was still standing by the fire, standing stiffly with something of unapproachable dignity about her, when Bill came down a few minutes later; but Bill was not troubled by the dignity, and curled herself up in the big chair on the other side of the fire evidently quite satisfied. She



spent the evening helping Robert to mend whips, quite satisfied with that too; possibly she found it an improvement on learning grammar with Carrie and Alice.

Theresa was relieved to find that Bill and Robert showed so much inclination to friendliness; indeed, at the end of two days she came to the conclusion that they were better friends than ever Robert and Bella had been. It was a very good thing, she thought, as she watched Bill wandering about the cow-yard and investigating the pig-styes. Bill took the keenest interest in pigs and poultry, cows and butter; her interest extended to the dairy, the kitchen, and the store-room; she seemed anxious to do any work she could. Theresa gave her dusting and churning, and she worked with a will, though when the churning was done Theresa was rather horrified to find her young cousin scrubbing the dairy-floor.

"Bill! What are you doing?"

"Clearing up,—I upset some butter-milk." Bill was kneeling on the bricks and she did not cease scrubbing to give the answer.

"But, my dear child, there is no necessity,—get up."

"I like it, I like clearing up. I did the old fowls' house just before I came in here; you should see it; it's beautifully clean. This afternoon I am going to lime-wash it, and then I shall put in the biggest family of chickens. They have not half enough room where they are; Robert said I might move them if I liked."

"Yes, but,—surely you need not lime-wash the house yourself; one of the men can do it. You must not do it; you will make yourself in such a state."

"I am afraid I am rather a dirty worker."

Theresa glanced at Bill's present condition and saw that the statement

was only too true. "You must leave off," she said; "the soapsuds are all up your sleeves; besides, I want to speak to you."

"All right, I can hear; you sit down on that wooden tub; I'm just done, and I can finish while you are talking."

Theresa sat down in spite of her protestations. "I want to talk to you about the prayer-meeting," she said. "You know, during Lent Mr. Johnson holds meetings once a week, a kind of Bible-reading. We meet at different houses and read passages from the Bible, and he explains them and gives a little address. They are really rather nice, and not too long. We meet at seven and it is all over quite early; we usually have supper about half-past eight."

"Yes?" Bill was working industriously at the last corner.

"I meant—do you think you would care to go?" Theresa asked this somewhat doubtfully. Bella and Polly had been amused by the idea of the Ashelton prayer-meetings, and Bill, according to Polly's account, was not likely to treat them more respectfully. However, to Theresa's satisfaction, Bill answered with enthusiasm: "I should like it tremendously; is it to-night?"

"No, to-morrow. To-day is market-day at Wrugglesby, you know; nothing here is ever fixed on a market-day."

"I see," Bill said, taking up her pail of water; "then it's to-morrow? I'll come if you will take me," and she went away to empty the pail.

Theresa watched her go, and then went into the house feeling that her guest was easy to entertain, and gave really very little trouble, in spite of Polly's prognostications. Indeed she had been very glad of her company ever since her arrival, and especially so to-day as Robert had gone to

market and was not likely to be back till late. The day seemed all the shorter for the girl's presence in the house. The weather was gray and cloudy, and Theresa had a headache; she was very glad Bill was with her in the afternoon. Later on, in the evening, when her headache became bad, she was persuaded by her young cousin to go to bed and leave her to wait for Robert.

"I hardly like to go; you don't think it will seem unkind?" Theresa offered this last protest standing by the door, her candle in her hand.

"No, of course not, I'll explain."

Bill somehow knew, though Theresa did not, that Robert did not view things in the same light as his wife did; so she persuaded her to go to bed and settled herself by the fire until the servant was ready to go up-stairs. After that she went round the house and fastened the doors, standing a moment in the hall curiously impressed by the silence of the place. "I have never been up alone in a sleeping house before," she meditated as she put out the light and stretched out her hands in the darkness as if to feel to the full the sense of solitary night. At that moment she remembered that she had fastened the back door which Theresa had told her particularly to leave unlocked, as Robert always let himself in that way.

She went back and unfastened it, turned the handle to see if it were really unbolted, and stood a moment looking out. The night-breeze stirred her hair; the moist fragrance of the earth came to her; she drew her breath in deeply, slowly, turning her head from side to side, listening to the intense stillness; it seemed to her that she could almost hear things growing. Her heart began to beat faster; the blood in her veins stirred in unison with the moving sap in the

hidden trees; some wild creature of the woods was waking in her, bidding her go forth into the darkness. A board creaked; it was only the timbers settling down for the night, but it recalled her to the house and to her task of waiting for its master's return. With a last glance at the cloudy sky, she went in and shut the door.

There was another that night who found it dark, so dark that more than once he missed his way in the deep lanes which lay between Sales Green and Ashelton. More than once he anathematised the business which led him to come home from Wrugglesby market by way of the little village; the cross-roads were intricate and in bad repair, and under the darkness of the trees it was impossible to see so much as the hedgerow elms on either side. At last he heard the sound of wheels away on the left; he was clear of the lanes and out on the high road now; just as he emerged a vehicle without lights passed, or rather, nearly collided with him.

He pulled his horse up and demanded angrily: "Where the devil are you going? If you want the whole road you might at least carry lights so that one can see what you are doing!"

"Where—going 'self?" a thick voice retorted. "Damn your clumsiness! Wha'—what 'yer mean by running a man down li' that?"

"Where are you trying to go?" The man was evidently too drunk to be argued with.

"Home;—that'sh if—if can get there. Brute pulls li'—like the devil."

"You had better let me drive you home, Morton—it is Morton? I expect I can see better in the dark than you can."

Morton raised no objection and the other dismounted as he spoke and climbed up beside him. "Pleased,

"I'm sure," Robert muttered. "Been to market? Oh, forgot,—saw you there myself, but you lef' early; very cred'able, Mr. Harborough, you' shober young man."

He laughed in a maudlin way, and they started on a straight course in the darkness, Harborough's horse, fastened by the bridle, trotting behind. A straight road lay before them, the ground rising clear from the shade of the trees, just showing paler against the blackness, then sloping gently downwards to deeper shadow until the turning by the village; there the road forked, now to the left, through the open gateway, up the chase, and so to the stables and home.

"Come on, ol' chap, come in and have a—a glass of whishky,—don't b' unsociable."

Harborough hesitated and thought of Mrs. Morton. He glanced up at the house; there was a light in one of the lower windows, the rest were dark—was she sitting up for her husband? He thought of the young wife with her serene, unconscious face, waiting for this, and yielding to the affectionate pressure on his arm he went in.

"There does not seem to be any one up," he said, as he opened the door and paused on the threshold.

"Oh, yes, sure to be, sure—confound—"

As Morton stumbled, Harborough held him up, and then stood listening a moment. The house was very quiet except for the chirping of crickets in the kitchen. Guided more by instinct than by his companion he made his way to Mrs. Morton's favourite sitting-room and opened the door, expecting yet dreading to meet the sweet face of the young wife. But she was not there; involuntarily he breathed a sigh of relief and braced himself to face her substitute. There was a substitute, someone curled up

in the big chair by the fire, a slim young girl. She had been reading, and apparently had but just discovered their presence in the house, for she only looked up from her book as they entered.

"Theresa has gone to bed," she said, rising as she spoke. She did not seem at all surprised to see them both. Harborough wondered if she understood, or if Morton returned in this condition so often that she was prepared for it. "Poor Theresa's head was so bad that I persuaded her to go, and to let me sit up," she added.

"That 'ch al'right, you'n I—quite happy without her," Morton said thickly, smiling upon the girl.

"You won't want to disturb her to-night," she went on. "Her head is ever so bad; you will sleep in the blue room, won't you? That will do nicely."

"That'll do—we won't dish'turb her, poor—poor T."

"Is the room ready?" Harborough asked quickly.

She shook her head, and flitted away with light noiseless feet. Morton stretched out a hand to detain her but she passed him like a shadow and was gone.

"Make her sing when 'comes back—sing to you,—cap'tal song."

Harborough turned away abruptly. Evidently she had not expected this sort of home-coming, or surely the room would have been ready. Probably it had not occurred before, to Mrs. Morton's knowledge at least; if it had, she would never have left this child to face it alone; for a child she was, fifteen, sixteen perhaps, but a child certainly. A great anger rose in Harborough's heart against the man who had brought his beastliness home here. He glanced round the room, which impressed him as daintily feminine, doubtless arranged by the bride nine months ago. Her work-

basket stood on the table, a few spring flowers were on the mantelpiece; the whole place was pathetically eloquent of her presence. Harbrough picked up a book which lay on the table and looked at the title—*ROMANCES AND DROLLS OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND*—an old book of West Country legends and folk-lore, fairy tales of a primitive order, the book that the girl, who had just left the room, had been reading. Pleasant to call a child from her fairy-stories to meet a drunkard!

"Now come to bed." She had returned as noiselessly as she had gone.

"Bed? Not 'f I know it!"

"Yes, come along."

"I will see Mr. Morton to bed," Harbrough said. "Which is the room? No, tell me, don't trouble to come."

"Second door from the top of the stairs," was the direction she gave, and Harbrough, coercing his charge, went up-stairs. With the door safely shut on them he used more force than persuasion, feeling heartily sick of the whole business. When he came down again the girl was in her old position, reading her fairy-book as before.

"Is he in bed?" she asked.

"Yes. Are you alone here—I mean, are you going to shut the house up?"

"Yes, all that is still open. I must, you see, there is no one else. You can't do it when you are outside, and you won't want to stop in to do it; it is not difficult."

"No. You are rather young to be left alone.—I won't keep you up; good-night."

She went to the door with him, the one opening on to the yard by which he and Morton had entered a little while before. On the step he hesitated; he was standing in shadow, she in the light of the lantern she had brought that she might see to fasten the door after him.

"If I were you," he said doubtfully, "I should not disturb Mr. Morton more than I could help. I would not pass his room unless it were necessary."

"No."

Nevertheless, after he had gone she stole noiselessly to the door and turned the key outside for fear the sleeper should awake and disturb Theresa in the night. But then that was quite necessary in her opinion, and no one was the wiser for she unlocked it again between four and five in the morning.

As for Harbrough, having given the caution, he felt satisfied and after repeating "good-night" went down the yard. He looked back once before she closed the door. She was still standing in the same position, the lantern in her hand, an elfin thing in its glow against the brown shadows of the passage, herself all brown and red, skin and hair and eyes, colours such as Rembrandt loved. She moved, scattering splashes of light from her lantern, then shut the door; and Harbrough mounted his horse and rode a good mile home to Crows' Farm.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Nobody could make farming pay, at least no one about Wrugglesby. This was an axiom in the Ashelton district, which no one attempted to confute though each had an explanation for it, according to his political opinions and education, or want of education. But one and all believed it, though they continued to farm and to grumble, both the small men and the great. The small men were very small, little more than peasant tenants with neither the capital nor the ability to farm their small holdings with any show of justice to the starved land, living

from hand to mouth, employing no labour, themselves and their families practically doing the work, and doing it indifferently. The great men were quite another class, a cross between a landed gentry and a yeoman squirearchy, socially ranking with the professional classes and for all practical purposes supplying the place of the county-families, now for the most part either impoverished or else removed to more congenial centres. The greater farm-owners undoubtedly did make some profit out of the land, or appeared to do something very like it, though possibly they might have done so more successfully had they inclined more towards the yeoman squirearchy and less towards the landed gentry in their tastes and habits.

At least such was the opinion of one who, a little more than six months previous to Bill's advent in the Morton household, had come to settle among the yeoman-farmers and to prove to himself and to them some of the theories he held with regard to farming. His theory-in-chief was a short one, and could be summed up in one word,—work. A working farmer could make it pay; there were one or two of the old-fashioned sort of large working farmers still left, who made it pay, even though they had no social position and wanted none. Their net profits were small, it is true, but then they had not the benefit of a modern education; they were also abnormally pigheaded, and, in spite of experience, would do as their fathers had done in the palmy days of Protection. Young Gilchrist Harborough was of opinion that, were it only possible to unite the work in detail of these men with the knowledge and capital of the gentleman-class, results of surprising grandeur could be obtained.

He held this theory long ago, before ever he saw the English farmer

at work; he held it still more firmly now that fate had given him an opportunity of putting it to the test. The opportunity had come unexpectedly in the shape of a legacy from a friend of his father's, a man who had at one time stayed in the bush-home where Gilchrist was reared, and who, half amused and half pleased by the young man's earnestness, had left him Crows' Farm and a sufficiency on which to try his theories on a small scale.

An unpretentious, whitewashed building was the farm, not unlike two cottages knocked into one. For many years it had been inhabited by a bailiff who farmed the adjoining land, the owner, frequently absent abroad, only coming down for the partridge-shooting. Ashelton was fond of this man, and genuinely sorry to hear of his death; he was the kind of man those good folks understood, and was sadly missed at the social functions which always took place in September and in which he usually joined. But the new owner, the young Australian to whom he had left the farm, was something of a puzzle to them. Of course he had a right to his theories: everyone has in these highly educated days; but it is not every one who tries to put his theories into practice, nor who, moreover, has such uncomfortable ones. Harborough lived the life of a working farmer in his little old house; lived, so report said, almost like Robinson Crusoe, doing his own cooking and cleaning, rising early and sharing even the most menial toil with his few labourers. This was not all strictly correct, but it was near enough to the truth to satisfy Ashelton, and the parish talked and wondered, and said dubiously that the experiment might answer, questioning for a while how Mr. Harborough would be received. But in



the winter the question was settled by Mrs. Dawson who, perhaps, alone was capable of settling it finally. She, under the influence of her son Jack, decided that Mr. Harborough was as one of themselves, notwithstanding his theory and his colonial origin,—a decision which scarcely did justice to Harborough, but gave great satisfaction to everyone, even including Mr. Dane, the old rector. He, indeed, had seemed particularly to appreciate it, and had even listened to Mrs. Dawson's judgment on the case with a faint smile flickering in his gray eyes. It is true he made Harborough's acquaintance without waiting for Mrs. Dawson's decision, but then, as she said, the rector, of course, knew everybody. Mr. Johnson, the curate, being only a curate, had waited for her decision.

But none of these matters troubled Harborough. He lived his life in his own way, working hard as long as he was able, smoking hard when work was done; reading sometimes, and the books had nothing to do with the theory, neither were they such as Jack Dawson would have chosen; dreaming sometimes, in spite of the theory, in spite also of the pure reason with which he was still young enough to believe he governed his life. Of his neighbours he thought little; he was friendly when he came across them, but with the friendliness of the self-contained man who regards the rest of his kind as supernumeraries, necessary parts of the world-play, but as well filled by one set of actors as by another. He knew about his neighbours, of course, since he could not well live in Ashelton without doing so; but he did not care greatly about them, nor was there any reason to care; nothing to his knowledge had gone seriously wrong or seriously right in Ashelton until that night when he took Robert Morton home.

That night there had been something seriously wrong, and the more he thought about Morton, the more wrong the whole matter seemed. Drunkenness looked such a beastly thing in this quiet little village, in that peaceful home with that fair young wife. "The man's a brute," was his disgusted verdict, "coming home to a wife like that! Lucky it wasn't her. By the way, I wonder who the girl was, queer little thing."

But he did not wonder very much, for he was too sleepy that night and too busy the next day till the time when the girl revealed her identity to him. It was somewhere about noon when he saw her, as he was returning by a lane which bordered one side of the Haylands property. He had been that way once before during the morning, but was not aware that anyone had been watching him. As he came back, however, he met the girl of last night's adventure evidently waiting for his return. The Morton's orchard was here; an old untidy orchard, with old stooping apple-trees, lichen-covered and unpruned, a thicket of nuts and pollard quinces and, beyond, a briery tangle of blackberries. As yet there was neither flower nor leaf, except for one plum tree near the gate white as snow in its blossom.

It was in the orchard that Harborough saw the girl. She was sitting on the gate deliberately waiting for him, and when he came in sight she made the fact known.

"I want to speak to you," she announced. "I have been waiting ever so long."

"I'm sorry," he answered, in some surprise; "now I have come, what can I do for you?"

"It is about Robert, Robert Morton—is he often drunk?"

If Harborough had any delusions as to her not grasping the situation last night, they were now dispelled.



"I don't know," he said; "I have never seen him so before."

"Do you think he often is?"

"I really cannot tell you; I am only very slightly acquainted with him."

A little smile crept round the corners of the girl's mouth. "I didn't suppose you were great friends," she said.

Harborough bit his lip. His tone had not implied it, yet he was conscious that there had been a slight feeling of annoyance at the suggestion of intimacy conveyed by her words; there was now a second feeling of annoyance that she should have discovered the first.

"I am a comparatively new comer in the place," he said somewhat stiffly; "you would perhaps do better to ask someone who has lived here longer."

"Umph!" As she made the oracular answer she drew her legs up to the top bar of the gate and clasped her hands round them in a position Harborough considered most unsafe. As he watched her, fascinated, wondering which way she would fall, she turned a little towards him.

"Take care!" he exclaimed.

"Theresa does not know," she said, answering her own thoughts. "She has no idea; but she will, you know."

Harborough thought it possible, but he only said: "I suppose her husband told her he did not wish to disturb her last night?"

"Yes."

"Then I do not see how she is to know, if you do not tell her."

"No, not this time; but next,—I may not be here then."

"How do you know there will be a next time?" he asked. "You have no reason to suppose this was anything but,—but an accident which might happen to any of us."

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"You, for instance?"

Her blandly innocent eyes were turned on him. "Any man," he answered briefly. The eyes showed neither surprise nor disgust; in fact they did not seem much convinced, and he went on. "There is no reason to say it must occur again; why do you?"

"Why do you?"

"I do not," he answered; "I should be very sorry to give such a definite opinion on the subject."

"Well, then," she replied cheerfully, "that is the difference between us. I give the opinions, you only have them, but we mean the same thing."

"I have not formed any opinion."

"No, but you know him,—not very well, I dare say,—but you know other men. I don't know him very well either, better than you do, of course, but not well. I came here on Tuesday, and to-day is Friday; before that I don't think I saw him more than six times; but, all the same, I know he will get drunk again."

"Pray, did you expect him to be drunk last night?" Harborough asked.

"No," she answered; "I had never thought about it. Until I saw him last night I never thought about his drinking; now, of course, I know."

"I must say you took it very coolly," he observed, "that is, if it was a revelation to you."

She shrugged her shoulders, till he thought she must inevitably fall off the gate; she did not, but turned to him, asking, "What would you have had me do?"

"Nothing different from what you did. I meant that you did not seem at all upset."

"No, I don't think I can be upset easily." He unconsciously looked at the squirrel-like perch on the gate.

"You see," she went on, "there was a good deal to be done till you went; after that I thought."

"Yes!" He wondered what she thought, what sort of brain she had under that thatch of copper-brown hair.

"It is about Theresa," she went on to explain; "she does not know, and she must sooner or later; he is bound to let it out some time. He may have got drunk and hidden it in the past; he may do so in the future; but sooner or later there will come another time like last night and she will find out."

He drove his stick into the ground thoughtfully. "Well," he said at last, "if this is all as inevitable as you say, if this takes place, I suppose Mrs. Morton will have to bear it, as other women have borne it before. There is nothing else for it; we can't help her; she will just have to bear it."

Harborough felt this was cold comfort. It was easy talking out here in the spring sunshine, easy adjusting the burden to the accompaniment of the thrushes' love-songs; but to bear it was another matter, and the girl evidently thought so.

"You don't know Theresa," she said. "She just can't bear it; I think it would kill her."

Harborough repressed a smile. "I don't think it would do anything of the kind," he said, from his wider knowledge of mankind. "Mrs. Morton by this time knows, what you, too, will find out some day, that the world is peopled with men not heroes, and that you must take men, even husbands, as you find them, and not despair and die because they are not heroes of romance."

"That's just what Theresa has not found out," Theresa's cousin persisted, "at least not properly. She and Robert don't quite understand

one another, I'm afraid. It's an awful pity for people to get married; they can't really know one another unless they have lived together for a long time first. You see, T. has lived such a different life. It was a kind of she-life, quiet and dainty and small, and nice as nice could be,—weak tea in old china and wash the cups up carefully afterwards—that is how we lived. The pity is she married Robert; it might have answered if she had married some other man, better, perhaps, or more,—more watered down, or something; I don't know how to say it, but you understand how it is. They just belong to different kinds of people."

Harborough leaned against the gate-post, the one opposite to the end of the gate on which the girl sat; he was careful not to give her the least jar as he considered the connubial problem presented to him. "Of course you think Morton is to blame," he said at last. "You would blame him far more than your sister—cousin is it?—your cousin then. He is, I suppose, a low hound, drunken and all the rest of it?"

"Well," she answered slowly, "it isn't so much that; he has his good points of course, though I don't altogether like him. It isn't exactly a case of right and wrong; it's how the thing seems to the other person, and it'll seem bad to T. For myself, I don't think I should like getting drunk, but I don't so much mind about things; I can understand how it is in a way, and besides, it is not such a sin to his nature; it isn't nice, but it is all of a piece with himself."

Harborough nodded. "That's so," he said and added: "To come home drunk is not, after all, such a dreadful thing from a man's point of view; it is not nice, as you say, but it is not the most awful thing in the world. Life's entire happiness does not cease

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because of it; it is not the end of all things."

"No," she said thoughtfully looking past him into some fancy picture. "No, there is always the necessity to get up and have breakfast next morning, even after a big tragedy; things don't end."

He laughed a little. "Naturally not, and a good thing too on the whole, though perhaps it is not dramatic. Why not induce Mrs. Morton to take your truly judicial view of the case?"

"My view? It couldn't be done."

"Why not? I think I understood you to say that she had lived in the same circumstances as yourself; if the view is possible to you, why not to her?"

"I don't know, but it is not," Bill spoke with absolute conviction. "Besides, I can't speak about it to her; I can't even warn her what to expect. If she had been with me when you brought him home last night, I should have been obliged to pretend I did not know what was the matter, and I should have kept up the pretence afterwards."

"Would you?" he said, eyeing her curiously. "I suppose you would, and she would have helped you; women always try to hide the shortcomings of their loved ones. She won't admit it when she finds him out; she will stand by him with a sort of proud deceit to the end."

"Of course," Bill answered simply; "he is her family now, and you must stand by your family, right or wrong."

"I suppose that is what you call loyalty," Harborough said with a laugh. "I was born in a land where we don't think so much of our families, where we have not always reason to think much of them."

"Mine isn't much to boast of," Bill admitted. "But that has nothing to do with it; I must stand by them all

the same,—why, I should bolster up Polly. But we are no nearer the settling of Theresa; I suppose we never shall be, so there is no more to be said. Thank you for telling me all you knew."

"All I didn't know; that is what it amounts to."

She moved as if she were going to get off the gate, then stopped in the act and said suddenly: "Polly said Robert would die of apoplexy,—die young. What do you think?"

"I think it is a solution of the difficulty I should not dwell on, if I were you."

"Why not? Isn't it likely?"

"I should say it was at least uncertain; also it is not usually considered decent to think about such things, at all events to talk about them."

"Oh, decent!" she said, and laughed softly as she remembered Carrie's and Alice's lecture. Then she dropped off the gate and was immediately lost among the orchard-bushes. He stood for a moment, half expecting her to come back, though he did not know why. As she did not, he went on, smiling a little.

Gradually the smile died away. It was all very well to smile out there in the sunshine, all very well to talk under the apple-boughs, but the fact remained, the grim, stern fact. It was no concern of his, it is true, but he could not help thinking about it. Of course he knew that Morton drank, not desperately, nor enough to do any serious harm, not more than did plenty of other men, nothing more than occasionally a little too much; so serious an affair as last night's occurrence would probably be an exception. It was not exactly a cardinal sin, it was just part of his nature, as the little brown girl had said, a kind of nature for which Harborough had a tolerant contempt when regarded as

a detached specimen; as a personal acquaintance it naturally wore a different aspect. "If a man drinks, he drinks, and it is his affair. One can forgive lapses; we are none of us exactly bread-and-butter saints when we are nearing the thirties." Harborough emphasised the words with his stick; he had almost said them aloud, not quite but loud enough for the man, who that moment joined him, to guess part of the speech.

"Who is not a saint when he is nearing the thirties?" he asked. "Forgive me for surprising your thoughts, Mr. Harborough; you really should not think so loud, you know."

"I will forgive you more easily than I fancy you would forgive me for thinking them." So Harborough answered, for he had certain very definite notions as to what was and what was not acceptable to the clergy, and it was a clergyman who had accosted him, the rector of Ashelton on his way to the rectory by a field-path well known to at least one of his parishioners.

Perhaps Harborough misjudged this clergyman; at all events he promised forgiveness for all sins of thought before they were expressed. "I give absolution beforehand," he said; "now confess the whole."

"The whole? I am afraid I was speech-making to myself, a bad habit I have got from living so much alone; still you shall have it all. Here goes, —If a man drinks, he drinks, and it is his affair. One can forgive lapses; we are none of us bread-and-butter saints when we are nearing the thirties. But a man whom the divine wisdom has, it would seem, for its own purposes made something of a beast should keep his beastliness for suitable places. There is a lot done

'somewhere east of Suez' and in other places nearer at hand, which one does not blame a man for doing there; but when he does it in his wife's drawing-room,—when he is such an egregious fool, such an unmitigated brute—why then he wants kicking, and he should be soundly kicked."

Mr. Dane laughed a little, but whether at the length of the speech or the unconscious earnestness of its delivery did not appear. "Yes," he said, "yes, brutes want kicking; I'm not sure we don't all want kicking sometimes. Poor little wife; God help the wife, whoever she is!"

Harborough acquiesced. "And yet," he said doubtfully, "if she understood, it would be easier, much easier; a good woman is a hard judge."

"Ay, possibly." The rector's cold gray eyes seemed to summon up the memory of some good woman who had judged hardly. "They were not made to understand some things."

"Not all women," Harborough interposed.

"Not all; are you sure she was a good woman, this exception of yours? But perhaps we had better not start a controversy now; it is too late. I suppose the good women will judge the bad men, and love them too, to the end of the story. Bad men? No, I beg pardon, average men, neither good nor bad, just human, no bread-and-butter saints—good-bye."

They parted at the rectory-gate. Just as it closed after Mr. Dane he turned to call after Harborough: "How about the beef and beer saints? What of them?"

"Are there any?"

"Yes, and they're good for three-score years and ten."

*(To be continued.)*

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## HISTORY AT PLAY.

THE hundred years which lie between the Jacobite insurrection of 1745 and the schism in the Scottish Church in 1843 form, as everyone with a care for good literature should by this time know, the period covered by Sir Henry Craik's *CENTURY OF SCOTTISH HISTORY*. Between these two points, whether from a social, a political, or a literary point of view, lies a field of inexhaustible interest. The *Waverley* novels first awakened the curiosity of Englishmen with regard to the manners, customs, and habits of what had hitherto been to the majority of them an almost unknown region, and created that demand for a more intimate knowledge of it which so many amusing writers have since endeavoured to supply. Among the names that will occur to everyone are Lord Cockburn, Dr. Alexander Carlyle, Dean Ramsay and Dr. Somerville; and to these must also be added the name of Mr. Henry Graham, whose *SOCIAL LIFE OF SCOTLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*, published only two years ago, has to some extent anticipated that portion of Sir Henry Craik's book which relates to the domestic habits and characteristic humours of the Scottish people. But Sir Henry has given us a more comprehensive work than any of the above-named authors, embracing as it does the religion, literature, and politics of the whole period, and necessarily relegating its social aspect to a comparatively subordinate place. We can scarcely ever expect to see a more valuable work upon the same period, or one in which the due proportion between its component parts

is more carefully observed. Its merits, however, have been sufficiently recognised by the public press, and we have no intention of adding another to the numerous reviews of which it has already been the subject. We propose only to note a few of the instances in which the serious annalist shows us the originals of those imaginary characters which have delighted three generations, and to amuse ourselves with identifying in the pages of history the faces and figures which have so long been familiar to us in the domain of fiction.

Sir Henry has pointed out that the success of the Act of Union left the Jacobites no alternative but an appeal to arms. After its accomplishment the alliance, which might have prevented it, between the Jacobites and those who agreed with them only in resisting it, was broken up, and the former were left to themselves. It is this, he says, "which binds 1707 to 1745 so closely in the chain of cause and effect." This is very true, and it is a truth which we do not remember to have seen so clearly expressed by any other writer. While the Union was a danger to be averted, a vast majority in Scotland, with the Jacobites at their head, could have been arrayed against it. After it became a fact, the parties to the alliance had no longer any object in common: the Jacobites felt that a peaceful restoration was impossible; and the immediate result was that preparation for civil war to which Scott introduces us in *THE BLACK DWARF*. We see Sir Frederick

Langley, Ellieslaw, and young Mareschall-Wells drinking King James's health in many an old Scotch manor-house, and many a Hobbie Elliott rushing in with the announcement that "Byng had banged the new king off the coast." In the new House of Commons, Lockhart of Carnworth was at this time the manager of the Jacobite party which numbered forty-five members, and Sir Henry's portrait of him is a masterpiece. But we must pass this over to make room for another of still greater interest and insight. We leap over a quarter of a century and find ourselves face to face with Prince Charles Edward, much as we see him in both *WAVERLEY* and *REDGAUNTLET*.

His education had been neglected, his range of experience had been narrow, but he had the rare power, which in spite of all other blemishes gives the stamp of greatness to its possessor,—that of discerning, and rising to the height of a great opportunity. That the aims of the band of which he was the centre should be mistaken and foredoomed to failure; that history had already written an adverse verdict in characters only too clear upon the cause which he represented,—nay, even that he was himself to decline into a discredited and degraded age—all these do not rob him of the glory of seizing the right moment for acting a hero's part in the last struggle of a lost, but still romantic cause.

About the verdict of history we are not sure that we should agree with Sir Henry Craik, that is to say so far as the immediate success of the expedition was concerned. But fact and fiction, romance and history are so inextricably woven together in the record of this memorable enterprise that it is difficult, if not impossible, to say where the one ends and the other begins.

We can only notice one or two points on which Sir Henry's judgment seems open to question. He says of the

Prince's situation at Derby: "Three armies were now on foot, one just in front of them, one to their rear under Wade, and one in London under the King; against not one of these could they expect a victory." It is, in the first place, doubtful whether the Duke of Cumberland was at this moment in front of Charles; and as for the army at London under the King, when we consider what it was composed of, the Highlanders might, we think, have confidently expected a complete victory over that portion of the defensive force. In the second place Charles's entry into London would almost certainly have roused the English Jacobites; and there is every reason to believe that had he continued his march on the metropolis he would have been joined by a large body of Welsh cavaliers under Sir Watkin Wynn. We quite agree with Lord Stanhope that, had he gone on, nothing could have stopped him from reaching St. James's Palace. How long he would have stayed there is another question. To the later fortunes of the Jacobite party we shall recur when we come to the Scotland of Sir Walter Scott's youth,—the Scotland of *REDGAUNTLET* and *GUY MANNERING*. For the present we will conclude what little we have to say of Sir Henry's judgments on public affairs and public men, by calling special attention to his account of Henry Dundas, the friend of Pitt and Walter Scott, and the pillar of Scotch Toryism for a quarter of a century.

It has often been asked what was the secret of Scotland's sudden conversion to Radicalism after 1832, and the question has often been answered by saying that it was the natural reaction against the Tory yoke which sat so heavily on the country during the fifty years of Tory ascendancy in England. Of this yoke Dundas was the representative. In England the



constituencies soon became pretty evenly balanced again between Whig and Tory; in Scotland they never did, not at least till times altogether outside the scope of this article. Sir Henry, however, would not, we suppose, endorse this view of the subject. He admits that during this period Scotland was governed by a close oligarchy, and enjoyed nothing which could fairly be called popular representation. But then he says that the oligarchy represented all that was best in the Scottish nature and Scottish character. This may be quite true; the question is what the people outside the oligarchy thought about it. Sir Henry would have us suppose that on the whole they were well satisfied with it.

We will now turn from politics to what will probably be much more interesting to the majority of our readers, the character, namely, of the old Scottish society in all ranks so long as Scotland kept herself jealously apart from English ways and manners. Sir Walter Scott has a passage in the last chapter of *Waverley* which may well serve as a text to all that follows.

There is no European nation which within the course of half a century, or little more, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland. The effects of the insurrection of 1745, the destruction of the patriarchal power of the Highland chiefs—the abolition of the heritable jurisdiction of the Lowland nobility and barons,—the total eradication of the Jacobite party, which, averse to intermingle with the English, or adopt their customs, long continued to pride themselves upon maintaining ancient Scottish manners and customs,—commenced this innovation. . . . Such of the present generation as can recollect the last twenty or twenty-five years of the eighteenth century, will be fully sensible of the truth of this statement; especially if their acquaintance and connections lay among those who, in my younger time, were facetiously called

"folks of the old leaven," who still cherished a lingering, though hopeless attachment to the house of Stewart. This race has now almost entirely vanished from the land, and with it doubtless much absurd political prejudice; but also many living examples of singular and disinterested attachment to the principles of loyalty which they received from their fathers, and of old Scottish faith, hospitality, worth, and honour.

With the help of Mr. Graham we shall endeavour to place some of the realities of Scottish life alongside of the fancy picture drawn by more than one Scotch novelist.

Edinburgh in those days represented Scotland far more closely than London ever represented England. "One effect of the smallness of the country," says Sir Henry, "was the concentration of social and political influence in the capital. . . . Within this narrow circle was comprised every type. . . . None deemed that poverty was an indignity." And he gives the following vivid picture of the High Street where the national traditions and old customs still lingered.

Between Holyrood and the Castle that serves as the most august monument of the nation's history, there ran one long street, flanked by lofty tenements to which access was gained by grim, narrow, and noisome passages. Along that street the pageants of centuries had passed; high festival and darkest tragedy had been enacted on its causeways; struggles that had shaken all modern nations, had seen many of their most exciting episodes transacted there; and the annals of some of the most illustrious houses of Europe must recall that street in telling of the fates of their most conspicuous members. And in the middle of last century the very houses which had been tenanted by the nobility of previous centuries, and which in their almost barbaric grimness drew a faithful picture of medieval times, still housed the aristocracy, the landed gentry, and the great lawyers of the Scottish capital, who were slow to alter even the outward semblance of that life

that had been handed down to them by their ancestors, and who clung to the sordid surroundings that a few years later would have been despised, as habitations, by their own menials. There, in houses piled storey upon storey, whose only access was by a foul-smelling common stair, in airless filth, and in darkness to which the sun could rarely penetrate, there congregated a proud, albeit a poor aristocracy, a gay and most sprightly society, one of the most learned and witty professional circles of which Britain could then boast.

In these confined quarters ladies turned their bed-rooms into drawing-rooms and there received their guests at tea. This custom may perhaps have been partly borrowed from France; but with the Scotch ladies living in these flats it became a necessity. The fashion was not limited to Edinburgh, for we find Mrs. Crosbie, the wife of the Provost of Dumfries, receiving Alan Fairford and Pate-in-Peril in her bed-room when they had emptied the last punch-bowl. Belonging to the poor aristocracy mentioned by Sir Henry were the quaint old dowager ladies of rank and poverty, among whom we suppose we must reckon old Lady Kittlebasket, cousin five times removed to Nanty Ewart of the JUMPING JENNY, who lived at the head of the highest stair in the Covenant-Close, with her silver posset-dish, her silver-mounted spectacles, and her Cambridge Bible bound in embroidered velvet. She was, it will be remembered, ejected from her airy habitation by Peter Peebles (on whom a just retribution fell afterwards) and perished in the workhouse.

The young ones were no doubt glad to descend from their nests as often as they could, and there were some outdoor amusements for them. There were the balls where, says Mr. Graham, each gentleman was expected to present his partner with an orange "which she sucked during pauses of

conversation or intervals in the dance." Poor Captain Clutterbuck, in the Introduction to *THE MONASTERY*, recalled this fashion with some bitterness. When he went to the dancing-class as a boy, his aunt always gave him an orange for his partner, which greatly against his will he was obliged to bestow on her, though, says he, "had I dared I would certainly have secreted it for my own private use." Nor was the tavern-life in those days confined to men. The ladies also enjoyed much innocent freedom; they would sometimes adjourn with a party of gentlemen to an oyster-cellar, where they ate oysters, drank porter, and danced till midnight, Jean Maxwell, afterwards Duchess of Gordon, being conspicuous on such occasions. But we have no acquaintance in fiction with these young ladies. Catharine Seyton might have enjoyed such a romp, and would have found a fitting partner in Roland Græme. Of the Jacobite remnant so frequently mentioned in Sir Henry's pages we are introduced to one member in *GUY MANNERING*, old Miss Bertram to wit, among whose repositories were found "a promissory-note for £20 by the Minister of the non-juring chapel (interest marked as paid to Martinmas last) carefully folded up in a new set of words to the old tune of *Charlie over the Water*." Another member of the same loyal and luckless brotherhood was Mr. Maxwell of Summer-trees, familiarly known as Pate-in-Peril, whose appearance and conversation are sketched by Sir Walter with inimitable truth and humour.

Scottish conviviality and Scottish hospitality have long been proverbial. One habit peculiar to Scotland was the meridian, a gill of brandy or a can of ale taken regularly at half-past eleven in the morning. The citizen shut his shop, or sent his wife to attend it, when St. Giles's bells rung out half-

past eleven. The learned Mr. Saddle-tree and his friends took their meridian on their way back from the gallows where Porteous was not hanged. Old Saunders Fairford rid himself of Peter Peebles, when it was desirable to get him out of court on the day of trial, by asking a friend to take him away and give him his meridian at John's Coffee-House. The tavern-life of Edinburgh, of which all these books are full, flourished together with the life in flats which has already been described, and disappeared along with it; but it died hard. Neither lawyers nor merchants nor doctors could see clients, customers, or patients in their own rooms, and consequently they made their appointments at the tavern. In GUY MANNERING we see the old system still lingering. Mr. Pleydell, a scholar, a gentleman, and a lawyer in high practice, still adhered to it, though he lived in a house with plenty of accommodation for clients. "They got me down to Clerihugh's," he said of some lawyers who wanted him to draw an appeal case much against his will on Saturday evening, "and there we sat birling till I had a fair tappit hen under my belt, and then they persuaded me to draw the paper." A tappit hen, it should be said, held three quarts; "men were men in thae days." The original of Mr. Pleydell was Andrew Crosbie, a great man at the Edinburgh supper-parties, where ladies were often present, and perhaps joined in *We be three poor Mariners* as Mr. Pleydell did with Julia Mannering and Lucy Bertram after the supper on the wild ducks at Woodburn. The men habitually dined or supped at taverns after the day's work, leaving the bedrooms on the flats for the use of their wives and visitors who came to tea. But both Mr. Pleydell, and twenty years earlier Saunders Fairford, entertained their friends at their own

houses; the latter having "some choice old wine in his little cellar of which on such occasions he was no niggard." When Allan puts on his gown he gives a "bit chack of dinner" to his friends and acquaintances likewise at his father's table. It must be remembered, however, that the dining at taverns was not peculiar to Scotland. It was a feature, though not so pronounced a one, of London life all through the eighteenth century; and men, when called to the Bar at the Temple or Lincoln's Inn, often gave their call-parties at a tavern as late as the middle of the last century and perhaps later. The revelry at Edinburgh, however, seems to have been more fast and furious. Burns said on his death-bed that the tavern-life of Edinburgh had killed him.

Scotch hospitality could not have had a better representative than Guy Mannering found at Ellangowan, or Waverley at Tully-Veolan. The histories show that none of this is exaggerated. Hosts prided themselves on filling their houses to overflowing. The young men often reposed in the barns and out-houses, and the girls two or three in a bed. The old Duchess of Gordon once entertained so large a house-party that there was no washing-room for the young ladies where they slept, and they were sent out to make their ablutions at the brook. But a marked peculiarity of Scotch hospitality was the excessive display of it at funerals. Indeed, both at marriages, christenings and burials, says Sir Henry, there was much lavish display, and large sums were laid out on bridal dresses. Mrs. Macshake (in Miss Ferrier's MARRIAGE) had a poor opinion of more modern customs.

They may call them what they like. But there's nae weddin's now [says the old lady, and then proceeds to give an account of her mother's wedding]. I canna tell you how mony was at it; mair

than the room wad hand, ye may be sure, for every relation and friend o' baith sides was there, as weel they should; an' a' in full dress; the leddies wi' their hoops on, an' some o' them had sat up aw night to have their heads drest: for they had nae they pooket-like taps ye hae noo, [looking with contempt at Mary's Grecian contour]. An' the bride's gown was a' sewed ow'r wi' favours, frae the tap down to the tail, an' aw round the neck, an' about the sleeves; and as soon as the ceremony was ow'r ilk ane ran, an' ragget an' rave at her for the favours, till they hardly left the gown upon her back. Then they didna run awa' as they do now, but six an' thirty o' them sat down to a grand dinner, an' there was a ball at night, an' ilka night till Sabbath cam' round, an' then the bride an' the bridegroom drest in their weddin' suits, an' aw their friends in theirs wi' their favours on their breasts, walked in procession to the kirk.

We know that when the Baron of Bradwardine was married, he was attended by "three hundred horse of gentlemen born, besides servants and some score or so of Highland Lairds," and he was much annoyed because only thirty could be mustered at the marriage of Rose and Waverley. The marriage of Bucklaw and Lucy Ashton was celebrated on a similar scale. "Glancing wide over hill and dale, the fair bridal procession at last reached the Parish church which they nearly filled, for besides domestics, above a hundred ladies and gentlemen were present on the occasion." There was the grand dinner, and the grand ball at night, with all the relations on both sides. There was no harm in this, if people could afford it; but funeral expenses, when they could not, seem to have been very unreasonable. Scott gives us two instances, one at the funeral of Steenie Muclebacket in *THE ANTIQUARY*, the other at that of Ravenswood's father in *THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR*. He says that a sumptuary law was passed by the

Parliament of Scotland prohibiting the grandees of the kingdom from indulging in such lavish expenditure; but the taste remained engrained in the peasantry, who would deny themselves the necessities of life to be able to gratify it. Nor was the Master of Ravenswood deterred by any fear of the law. When the church-service was interrupted a hundred swords glittered in the air, prepared to punish the intruder and protect the clergyman; and when it was over they all returned to the Tower "to consume deep healths to the memory of the deceased and to diminish by the expense of a large and profuse entertainment the limited revenues of the heir of him whose funeral they thus honoured." But such was the custom; and two years' rent of Ravenswood's few remaining acres would scarcely have defrayed the cost of it.

But what strikes one more than anything in the social life of Scotland at this period is the combination of austerity with intemperance, and even immorality, which we constantly encounter. The clergy affected no singularity in the matter of meredians, and when a minister was present he was requested to ask a blessing on the dram. Dr. Alexander Webster, the leader of the more serious party in the Church, the most unctuous of preachers, and the idol of the Saints who frequented the Tolbooth Kirk, had the strongest head and the most elastic conscience in all Scotland. "He was the life of the supper-parties in Edinburgh," says Mr. Graham, "from 1760 to 1780, could join over a magnum of claret on Monday with gentlemen of not too correct lives whom he had consigned to perdition on Sunday, and could pass with alacrity and sincerity from devout prayer by a bedside to a roystering reunion in

Fortune's Tavern, and return home with his Bible under his arm, and five bottles under his belt."

It may be that Thomson, who was a Scotsman, had some sound divine of the like kidney in his eye, when he drew the "Doctor of tremendous paunch," who saw the whole party under the table after the fox-hunting dinner, and went away sorrowfully lamenting the degeneracy of the age. We at once recognise the Reverend Duncan MacDow as an old acquaintance in *DESTINY*, though eating rather than drinking seems to have been his strong point. But we suppose we have no right to include Mr. Blattergowl in this goodly fellowship, though he did consume the Antiquary's chicken-pie and bottle of port, while engaged (worthy man) in pointing out to Miss Grizzel, who was alarmed for the safety of her brother, the duty of submission to Providence.

In spite of their addiction to good cheer, the Saints had a pious horror of profane amusements, and as such they considered both promiscuous dancing and play-acting. The pulpits rang with denunciations of both. Our old friend David Deans was a good hand at this kind of cursing. "Dance," said he, to his daughters, "dance, dance, said ye?" as the abominable word caught his ear on crossing the threshold. "I daur ye, limmers that ye are, to name sic a word at my door-cheek!" And David went to the root of the matter at once by referring to "that unhappy lass wha danced off the head of John the Baptist," as the prime historical example of the sin in question. "Upon which chapter," he added, "I will exercise this nicht for your further instruction, since ye need it sae muckle, nothing doubting that she has cause to rue the day lang or this time, that e'er she suld hae shook a limb on sic an errand." As for the

stage, that was still worse. The pit, said that model of propriety Dr. Webster (usually known as Dr. Magnum Bonum, because of his great goodness and his unquenchable thirst), only led to the pit that was bottomless. As for actors and actresses, they were considered, says Sir Henry Craik, as the scapegoats of society.

But if this was the case in Edinburgh, still more was it so in Glasgow, where as it so happened an Episcopal clergyman and a company of strolling actors made their appearance at the same time. This was in 1728, and if Bailie Nichol Jarvie was alive then, he must have wondered what sin the city could have been guilty of to bring down this double visitation on its head. He thought at first that young Frank Osbaldistone was a stroller; but when he found out he was "nane o' that play-acting and play-ganging generation that his saul hated," he asked him to eat "a reisted haddock wi' him the morn." The Bailie's dislike of such incentives to vice extended of course to poetry, though the only poet he had ever known was "Allan Ramsay, the periwig-maker." The society of Edinburgh, however, as well as of Glasgow, was pretty safe from the contamination of the theatre, as even the best educated classes understood very little high English, as it was called, and for a long time prided themselves on adhering scrupulously to the old Scottish diction. When an English company came to Edinburgh in those days they were not understood, and a young lady who had been taken to an extremely improper play saved her modesty by declaring that she did not understand a word that was spoken.

The belief in fairies and witches survived for a long time in Scotland. Mr. Graham gives an interesting account of these superstitions; and



we know that Bailie Nichol Jarvie was not altogether easy in his mind as he approached the banks of the Forth by moonlight, and looked on the thickly wooded hills which were supposed to be a haunt of the *Daoine Schie*, "Whilk signifies as I understand, men of peace; and we may as weel ca' them that too, Mr. Osbaldistone, for there's nae gude in speaking ill of the Laird within his ain bounds." But he added afterwards, as he saw a light or two tremble in the distance, "It's all deceits o' Satan!" Hobbie Elliott's father saw them sometimes when he was coming home from market, "with a drap drink in his head, honest man." Of witches and evil spirits of various kinds it is needless to say that Scottish records are full, and as they are fit materials for poetry and fiction, so of course we shall find abundant mention of them in that class of Scottish literature. Scott of course makes frequent use of them. The two old hags in *THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR* are the two most ghastly and revolting specimens of the class, as Norna, in *THE PIRATE*, is the most imposing of the number. But Auld Janet in *WAVERLEY* was believed to be a witch by the neighbours, and even by Bailie Macwheeble himself; that limb of the law declined to go down to her hut in the evening on the ground that there was something "no that canny" about her.

The Laird [Bradwardine] he'll no believe thae things, but he was aye ower rash and venturesome, and feared neither man nor deevil—an' sae's seen o't. But right sure I am Sir George Mackenzie says that no divine can doubt there are witches, since the Bible says thou shalt not suffer them to live; and no lawyer in Scotland can doubt it, since it is punishable with death by our law. So there's baith law and gospel for it. An his honour winna believe the Leviticus, he might aye believe the Statute-Book—but he may tak' his ain way o't; it's a' ane to Duncan Macwheeble.

Scottish inns for a long time had a bad name. Mr. Graham speaks of the wretched hovels and miserable hosteleries which did duty for inns in the middle of the century; and this is curious, because Sir Henry Craik informs us that Scotch inns were often kept by the younger sons of good families. "The calling," he says, "strange as it may seem to our ideas, retained enough of the dignity of the Boniface exercising a genial hospitality with something of independent authority to enable it to claim some social consideration." Gentlemen and ladies, too, may be found among the inn-keepers of the West of England to this day,—but that by the bye. If one may check the historian by the novelist, there must have been many exceptions to the miserable hovels here described. Scott himself, indeed, seems in one place to justify these harsh words. When Mr. Pleydell, on his arrival at Woodburn, is asked whether he has dined, he replies, "Yes, that is, as people dine at a Scotch inn;" and that, says Colonel Mannering, "is indifferently enough." Yet what would his friend, Mrs. MacCandlish of the Gordon Arms at Kippetering, have said to this? Mannering himself had stayed there, and, as the landlady said, had "everything comfortable for gentlefolks."

Only a very little later, the Anti-quary and Lovel dined well at the Hawes, and had a magnum of capital claret afterwards. The Cleikum Inn at St. Ronan's, kept by Meg Dods, was clearly a house where first-rate cooking and wine could be obtained, and though the date at which we are introduced to it was in the first year of the nineteenth century, it had a reputation of much longer standing, and must have been a flourishing establishment a quarter of a century before that. The



Clachan of Aberfoil was a miserable hovel no doubt, though the landlady knew how to do venison collops, but that was in 1715; and the inn at which Waverley stayed on his way to Tully Veolan, thirty years later, seems to have been no better: "The landlady had neither shoes nor stockings, and the landlord, who called himself a gentleman, was disposed to be rude to his guest because he had not bespoke the pleasure of his society to supper." Very likely, judging from what Sir Henry says, he was a gentleman, and the circumstance of gentlemen taking to this mode of life may have had something to do with the custom of which Waverley was probably ignorant. It was usual even in Scott's youthful days for the traveller to invite the landlord either to share his dinner, or at least to drink a bottle with him afterwards. Thus the "dignity of the Boniface," to quote Sir Henry again, was kept up, and the guest got all the gossip of the neighbourhood in return; a requital, however, for which Waverley would probably have cared very little. We had nearly forgotten Father Crackenthorpe who kept the inn on the Solway, which certainly, early in George the Third's reign was far from a miserable hovel.

The popular feeling in Scotland, which long ran mountain-high against the union with England, is of course discussed by Sir Henry at some length.

The benefits of the Union were of slow growth and gradual development; its evils were quick to show themselves, and were within the observation of all. The emblems of independence suddenly vanished; the Parliament House no longer echoed to strains of indignant eloquence; the streets of the capital were no longer crowded with the members of the Scottish estates and their retainers, and it seemed as if the profit which their presence brought was transferred for ever

from the pockets of the Edinburgh to those of the London tradesmen.

The dialogue between the two servants in Dr. Moore's *ZELUCO* is an excellent illustration of the above. The advocate of the Union employs all the usual arguments in its favour, but is utterly overborne by the impetuous Highlander, who eventually wounds him and disarms him in a duel. Increase of trade, says the victor, only means increase of luxury, which in turn only means effeminacy and national degeneration,—with more to the same effect. But by far the finest satire on the enemies of the Union is Scott's Andrew Fairservice, who imputed to the "sad and sorrowful Union" every change for the worse which he detected among his countrymen, particularly the augmentation of reckonings and the diminution of pint-stoups. A horse could not cast his shoe without the Union being held responsible for the misfortune. On one such occasion during their journey to the Highlands, the Bailie found it necessary to rebuke him: "Whisht, sir, whisht! It's ill-scraped tongues like yours that make mischief atween neighbourhoods and nations." But it was useless to tell him that nothing was ever likely to make Glasgow flourish like the sugar and tobacco trade. The magnanimous Andrew scorned such base considerations. "He 'wadna for a' the herring-barrels in Glasgow and a' the tobacco casks to boot, have gien up the riding o' the Scots Parliament, or sent awa our crown and our sword and our sceptre and Mons Meg to be keepit by thae English pock-puddings in the Tower o' Lunnon. What wad Sir William Wallace or auld Davie Lindsay hae said to the Union, or them that made it?" Such was the very general feeling, and honest Andrew's enlightened views on this subject were by no means confined to the

class to which he belonged, but were shared alike by high and low. It must have been a servant of the type of Andrew Fairservice who waited at the lady's tea-table and joined in the conversation.

The brilliant literary and scientific society for which Edinburgh was famous during the latter half of the eighteenth century of course occupies a large space in Sir Henry's pages. Scott's notice of it is almost confined to GUY MANNERING. Mr. Pleydell gives the Colonel some notes of introduction while he himself is for a few days otherwise engaged, and the Colonel finds them addressed to the chief leaders of literature and philosophy in the Scottish capital,—Hume, Ferguson, Robertson, Lord Kaimes, Adam Smith and others, a circle, says Scott, "never closed against strangers of sense and information and which has perhaps at no period been equalled, considering the depth and variety of talent which it embraced and concentrated."

The process by which the Scotch Jacobitism of the first half of the century gradually glided into the Scotch Toryism of the second is well described by Sir Henry, who points out what has not been generally observed, that as the abuse of Lord

Bute and the Scotch interest in general chiefly proceeded from the friends of the Whig party, or at all events the enemies of the King's government, it was only natural that Scotland should throw herself into the opposite scale and regard the Tories as her friends. After the death of Charles Edward, and still more after the outbreak of the French Revolution, the lingering Jacobitism of the Scottish aristocracy found a sovereign round whom it could rally in George the Third. The Benedictine Monk in the Introduction to THE MONASTERY probably spoke the sentiments of the great majority of the Jacobite Remnant:

May God bless the Reigning family in Britain. They are not, indeed, of that dynasty to restore which my ancestors struggled and suffered in vain; but the Providence who has conducted his present Majesty to the throne has given him the virtues necessary to his time—firmness and intrepidity—a true love of his country, and an enlightened view of the dangers by which she is surrounded.

So the old Jacobitism gradually passed away; but not till a worthy successor had risen from its ashes, which, should it ever be put upon its trial, would no doubt exhibit equal bravery and fidelity.

## THE ART OF FICTION MADE EASY.

It happened the other evening, when we were in company with some ingenious gentlemen, that the conversation turned on the subject of literature. Literature, be it noted, to most gentlemen, however ingenious, means nothing more or less than the few novels which happen to have been latest published and read, or possibly not read, for men may talk with a more open mind when their judgment is not warped by the prejudice of knowledge. Our conversation, then, was entirely connected with the fiction of the hour, and we certainly shall not quarrel with the reader if he is now convinced that our conversation was not worth recording, for indeed it was not, and we should not dream of troubling him with it. In its course, however, one or two remarks were passed which have since remained in our memory, not so much for their intrinsic value as for the trains of thought which they naturally suggest. One gentleman, who was standing with an air of large-hearted proprietorship before the fire, took upon himself the somewhat difficult duty of settling the relation of the general public to fiction, and we are bound to say he acquitted himself of it lightly enough. "In this connection," he said, "there is no such thing as a general public; mankind in its relation to novels is divisible into three classes; those (and they are the largest class) who write novels and do not read them, otherwise known as authors; those who read them and do not write them, of whom it is safe to conjecture that at least half will eventually remove

into the first class; and lastly those who neither read novels nor write them; they are the critics, whose reviews are so helpful to us in choosing a course of holiday reading."

As we know, there are some who would even speak disrespectfully of the equator, therefore it is hardly necessary to dissect this sweeping summary into its primordial inaccuracies, and hang the atoms up for public derision. The omniscience of an evening is soon forgotten, and in the gray light of the following morning its possessor is again the ordinary ignorant mortal whose opinions are founded dutifully upon his daily paper. But these remarks are not without a certain suggestiveness. The number of novels put forth yearly for the consideration of a patient world is enough to make the brain reel and the heart grow sick, if, that is to say, one is conscientious enough to desire to keep level with the conversational times. Conscience, however, is daily becoming less esteemed; it may be compared to an aching tooth which arouses in the sufferer only one wish, to kill the nerve. So, we suppose, it has come about that after a long course of conscience-killing man looks with indifference on the output of novels with which he can never hope to keep pace, even to so slight an extent as to know most of them by name. Perhaps, too, he has another source of consolation. He may have written, be writing, or intend to write one himself. This of course puts the whole matter in a very different light, for it makes all other

novels seem to him small and unimportant, trivial matters in no way connected with his own world. A Greek philosopher gave it as his opinion that "Man is the measure of himself;" we think that this statement reversed, "The measure of himself is man," though doubtless less philosophical, is a good deal more true to life; for, after all, what really interests a man is that which concerns himself, and no less true is the opposite, what concerns a man is that which interests him.

If then this source of consolation be admitted, it remains to be considered how large a number are benefited by it. We will not definitely state our own opinion on the matter, as it is highly inartistic to deal violent blows unexpectedly; more subtly we will put a question to the reader, which he may answer to himself without prejudice. Has he ever had an acquaintance whom he has not at some time suspected of a tendency to fiction, of the intention or desire, that is to say, of some day achieving fame and fortune by means of a novel? We fancy he will be hard put to it to answer in the affirmative, if his experience has been in any way comparable with our own. The bad habit of writing is not now the cherished property of the few; it is part of the natural equipment of the many, whether it actually results in a book or not. It is not improbable that the time-honoured natal endowment of the silver spoon will shortly be set aside as out of date, and that a gold nib will be substituted, or some other emblem indicative of the infant's future brilliancy as a writer.

The next remark, which we will permit ourselves to quote, came from the youngest member of the company. In the pleasing vernacular of the rising generation he said that a

certain novel was "jolly rotten." Pressed to explain, he said that the characters were "a lot of dummies" with about as much life as "my hat," while the grammar and style were "awful," and the plot "as old as the Ark." The book which he anathematised with such discriminating nicety, is one of the sort that is advertised by publishers as, "A strong story, brightly written, holds the interest from the first page to the last." It is, in short, a typical modern novel, no better and no worse than hundreds of others. Doubtless our young friend did not choose his words as carefully as he probably would have chosen them if he had been writing a review of the work in question; but making allowances for the force of modern speech, we are bound to say that his judgment was not at fault, and that the book of which we were speaking is "jolly rotten." We are compelled to go further, since we have said that it is typical, and to apply this hearty criticism to the whole class to which it belongs, that is to say, to the great majority of modern popular novels.

This will possibly shock susceptibilities of one kind and another, but what else are we to say of these lamentable productions? And how could they for the most part be other than lamentable, when we find the whole world turning author? It has come out at last, though we said a little while ago that we would not give our opinion. The trouble is that everybody, fit or unfit, wise or foolish, learned or ignorant, thinks himself or herself capable of writing a novel; and, worse still, is not content with the gratifying thought but is at once eager to put it to the proof. The result is the hundreds of "jolly rotten" novels aforesaid; books uninstructed with information or imagi-

nation, unrelieved by a ghost of humour or a gleam of intelligence.

But concerning the badness of the average novel we have said enough. Indeed it is only the profound sadness with which this subject inspires us, that has moved us to say so much. Since there is no help for it, we bear our affliction, with fortitude we trust, at least with resignation. Nor are we altogether without hope for the future. It has been borne in upon us that there is a small band of devoted workers who have set themselves the immense task of teaching the aspiring novelist how to write. Surely this is a sign that people are waking up to the fact that, to write a novel at all satisfactorily, an author must have certain qualifications, such, for instance, as a rudimentary knowledge of the English language; we do not for our own part insist on anything so abstruse as a plot, or characters that have at least some elements of human nature in their composition.

The most recent effort in this direction that we have seen bears the imposing, yet simple, title *How to WRITE A NOVEL: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE ART OF FICTION*; and we learn that it forms part of the *How To* series, a name which is also simple, if not imposing, and certainly most suggestive for a series. The writer, who is veiled under a modest anonymity, offers some excellent advice to those who propose to set about writing novels; people who no doubt, if left alone, would produce one of the ordinary popular novels, "strong stories, brightly written," of which we have heard. It also contains some interesting information and a great deal of quotation. For the world turned author we imagine it will be a most helpful and stimulating guide. The avowed position of the writer seems to be, briefly, that he cannot teach people to tell a good story, but

if they can contribute their own story, good, bad, or indifferent, he can teach them to tell it grammatically and logically; he can "increase the power of the telling and change it from crude and ineffective methods to those which reach the apex of developed art." To this Izaak Walton would have said "all excellent good;" we can at least say that it is much better than nothing. The ensuring of grammar and the avoidance of logical absurdity would be a great point gained, and would tend to make many novels if not readable, at least not entirely unreadable. We wish the author every success.

As we turn over the pages of the book we come across some pieces of advice which seem wonderfully apt for would-be authors of "strong stories." In a chapter on "Pitfalls" there are several, of which we will take one on that most enthralling subject, society.

Perhaps your novel will take the reader into aristocratic circles. Pray do not make the attempt if you are not thoroughly acquainted with the manners and customs of such circles. Ignorance will surely betray you, and in describing a dinner, or an "At Home" you will raise derisive laughter by suggesting the details of a most impossible meal, or spoil your heroine by making her guilty of atrocious etiquette. The remedy is close at hand; *know your subject*.

We cannot too warmly recommend the principle of this advice, but surely there might conceivably be difficulties about the last injunction. Some people are so exclusive. The young author might of course find it worth his while to call on the nearest duchess while she was giving a dinner-party in order to get his local colour right; but it might, we suspect, be also worth his while to cast about for an invitation first, or failing that to let himself out as a waiter. Perhaps the latter course would be the better, as giving more facility for observation.

Under the heading of "Topography and Geography" our author says :

Should you depict a lover's scene in India, take care not to describe it as occurring in "beautiful twilight." It is quite possible to know that darkness follows sunset, and yet to forget it in the moment of writing; but a good writer is never caught "napping" in these matters. If you don't know India, choose Cairo, about which, after half-a-dozen lengthened visits, you can speak with certainty.

This is good and sound, but surely he rates our intelligence somewhat low. We think we could undertake to say whether there was any twilight in Cairo after one visit, and that need be no very long one; after six we could speak with certainty on many other things besides twilight, on the appearance of the moon in that city, for instance. Can one lover make a scene? In a sense he could, of course, and a very unpleasant one, too, if he found a third party interfering with what our cheerful young critic would call "his best girl."

But we will not trespass further on the field of his didactic. It will be more within our own province if we venture to cull one or two flowers from his well-ordered garden of illustration. There is a most entertaining chapter on "How Authors Work," which shows us that the methods of the great novelists are at least as various as their styles, and that the embryo author who endeavoured to combine them would soon come to an early grave; the grave might even be his portion if he tried to imitate some of them. If he proposes, for instance, to live by his pen, it would never do for him to follow the admirable example of Mr. Bret Harte who "has been known to pass days and weeks on a short story or poem before he was ready to deliver it into the hands of the printer." Death in this case might be slow, but it would certainly be sure, as from

the nature of things man can only exist for a certain time without more solid food than a short story or poem.

Most of the authors who are quoted in this book work, or worked, according to the inspiration of the moment, which is perhaps the most satisfactory method, if the author ever has such moments. Anthony Trollope, however, seems to have been thoroughly conscientious. He allowed himself a certain space of time for the completion of a book and entered the amount which he had written every day in a diary marked for that purpose. We know something of this plan, as we once tried it ourselves. The only drawback that we can remember was that the manipulation of the diary (ruling it neatly in red ink, counting the words already written, and so on,) took so much time, that we had to devote every other day to it, and we doubt whether we gained very much. Continued practice, however, might have made us more expert, for we confess that we did not give it a very long trial. As it was, if our memory does not fail us, the novel and the diary expired together on the fourth day.

"Ouida writes in the early morning. She gets up at five o'clock, and before she begins, works herself up into a sort of literary trance." This is extremely interesting, for this literary trance explains a good many things hitherto not revealed to us, as, for example, how it came about that a pretty lady (in the delectable tale of STRATHMORE) was enabled to accomplish the unusual feat of castling her opponent's queen at chess; and how again Chandos, the incomparable Chandos, suffered himself to be crowned (to be sure it was by another pretty lady) with roses drenched in burgundy without a thought for his shirt-collar. The only other instance of a writer working in a literary



trance that we can recall at the moment, is where Lavengro is writing the history of Joseph Sell; but in his case it was induced by necessity, and not of his own free will.

It is very meritorious of the accomplished Ouida to rise so early, but we fear that she will find few imitators. The pernicious rhyme,—

When the morning rises red,  
Rise not thou, but keep thy bed;  
When the dawn is dull and gray,  
Sleep is still the better way—

is every whit as popular with literary men as with any other class of peccant mortals.

We know not if it even bears supposition that the young author could in any circumstances leave his well-earned sleep to sit down to his desk at half-past five in the morning. For our own part many considerations would deter us from such a proceeding. Most important is the question of breakfast, before which no man is a man worth speaking of. Then there are other things; our writing-table is by some inscrutable process put every morning into a semblance of tidiness, whereas in its normal condition (that is to say, as we left it the night before,) it is a sight to make angels weep. Moreover if on the previous evening our ingenious friends have honoured us with their company, there will have been libations, modest indeed but, by reason of glasses, decanters, and other hospitable appurtenances, tending to untidiness. And further, our cheerful young critic, after the manner of his kind, is as liberal with his cigar-ashes as with his comments. No, far be it from us to begin to write in the small hours.

Morning sleep avoideth broil,  
Wasteth not in greedy toil.

M. Zola, we learn, "darkens his rooms when he writes;" to hide his

blushes, we wonder? "Upon Ibsen's writing-table is a small tray containing a number of grotesque figures—a wooden bear, a tiny devil, two or three cats (one of them playing a fiddle) and some rabbits." The advantages of this are not obvious, though we seem to remember that Charles Dickens had something of a similar fancy; but there must be a purpose in it for Ibsen says: "I could not write without them; but why I use them is my own secret." Hawthorne appears to have torn his surroundings to pieces while composing. "He is said to have taken a garment from his wife's sewing-basket and cut it into pieces without being conscious of the act. Thus an entire table and the arms of a rocking-chair were whittled away in this manner." This method is also to be deprecated for various reasons.

Of Mr. Anthony Hope we learn, through the kindness of the ingenuous Mrs. Sarah Tooley, to whom he would appear (figuratively speaking) to have unbosomed himself, that he "is found at his desk every morning, but if the inspiration does not come, he never forces himself to write. Sometimes it will come after waiting several hours, and sometimes it will seem to have come when it hasn't, which means that next morning he has to tear up what was written the day before and start afresh." The idea of Mr. Hope sitting daily at his desk with his right hand holding a pen poised over his paper, and his left outstretched to grasp the forelock of the goddess Occasion, so soon as she presents herself, is irresistible. But the possibility of Occasion turning out to be a mere *simulacrum* in a wig has in it the elements of tragedy. We are tempted to ask, what does Mr. Hope do when his copy goes off to the printer the same day? Does he content himself with tearing up a proof?

We ask the question because of his latest DOLLY DIALOGUE, the one about the roller and the bump. Did he surround himself with fragments of the WESTMINSTER GAZETTE? Several careful perusals of it have failed to reveal its meaning to us; but of course the presence or absence of inspiration is a thing an author must decide for himself, and no doubt Mr. Hope knows what he means by it.

We should dearly like to be able to work on Mr. Robert Barr's principle, for which again we have to thank Mrs. Tooley. Before he "publishes a novel he spends years in thinking the thing out." He spent ten years in thinking out THE MUTABLE MANY! But against this plan there are the same objections as against Mr. Bret Harte's.

On the whole we doubt whether the methods of the great masters, as set forth in this book, are likely to assist the young author materially; though they are extremely valuable if only showing (what has been abundantly shown already) that great minds and little things often agree. Perhaps the writer might have done better to entreat of HOW NOT TO WRITE A NOVEL. One example is worth ten precepts, and had he taken a dozen average novels and extracted from them a few hundred examples of how the thing should not be done, his labours would, we cannot but think, have been of far more practical value. Consider, for example, the unhappy tendency to be epigrammatic, which we sigh over in so many of our younger authors, and more especially those of the female kind. The form which it generally takes is to make one woman say something spiteful about another in such a way that she can deny the soft impeachment if necessary. It is really very easy to do this, if you leave out enough words. We will

concoct an epigrammatic conversation in which the character of the lady under discussion is irretrievably destroyed, while neither of the speakers is committed to anything definite.

"Ah!" said Lady Fitzclarence, "it is easy for her to be good when—"

"When?" said he.

"When she has no inclination to be wicked, or—"

"Or what?"

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter, but—"

"But?"

"Ah!"

This is epigram, the epigram of the average novel, the epigram which impassioned reviewers (especially when the author happens to wear petticoats) describe as scintillating, or coruscating, with wit. And how much more than the epigram is there in the average novel that might be put into this Index Expurgatorius. The grammar, the style, the plot, the scenery, the conversation, the humour! "O the humour of it!" But we do not wish to embark on the work ourselves, so we will leave the suggestion where it is, for the author of HOW TO WRITE A NOVEL to use if he so pleases, and our hearty good will with it.

In conclusion we may be expected to give a word of advice to the intending author of a "strong story." Every man, it is often said, has it in him to write one good novel. Let him keep it there; let him keep it hermetically sealed within him. There is our advice in a nutshell. But if this will not content him, we have thought of a scheme of work which, properly applied, should simplify his own course, and also be of considerable benefit to the public. We offer it to him without prejudice.

(1) Do your writing whenever you are unoccupied.

(2) Take care that you never are unoccupied.

## FROM A NOTE-BOOK IN PROVENCE.

## I.—THE COURSE PROVENÇALE.

BESIDE the bull-fight proper, a Course Provençale, even a Grande Course Provençale, is a poor affair, mild and tame as a match between Cicero House and Sea View College when compared with Aston Villa against Notts Forest. But as a stepping-stone to the real thing, as a gentle introduction to a true Madrid holiday, it serves. The Course offers the ground-work for the bull-fight; a sufficient foundation, at any rate, for the imagination to build the greater fabric upon. I have never witnessed a bull-fight, but having seen a Course Provençale I now know something of what a bull-fight is. Indeed, if, as one versed in the great sport has assured me, there is only one moment in a bull-fight,—the entrance of the bull—I have plumbed the joy to its depths, for I had that moment five times repeated. There are, however, bulls and bulls, and I can never believe that the minute and ingratiating cattle of the Provençale arena are worthy representatives of the noble beasts that too seldom destroy the *toreadors* of Spain. Nevertheless, though the bulls of Provence hardly exceeded the stature of a Kerry cow, we had our thrills now and then; for, as it happens, a very small bull can make a very large bull-fighter run quite as fast as if a herd of buffalo snorted at his heels.

My Course Provençale was held at Nîmes, in the old Roman arena, on the afternoon of an intensely hot Sunday. According to the bills it

was to be a *Grande Course Provençale avec le Concours de Pouly fils, Pouly père, et leur quadrille, qui travailleront cinq superbes taureaux*. The company was to consist of the Poulys as aforesaid,—*Pouly fils, chef, and Pouly père, sous-chef*,—and of *L'Aiglon, sauteur à la Perche, Clarion, banderillo, Saumur, saut périlleux, and Gras, sauteur attaqueur*. At the time I read this promising bill, I knew of bull-fighting no more than that it is a pastime which every dutiful Englishman must deprecate at home and witness abroad; and being thus ignorant I was unaware that a Course Provençale is merely a muffled version of the genuine spectacle, a bull-fight with the buttons on, so to speak, an Easter review in the place of a battle of Agincourt. My anticipation therefore was as genuine (though tintured a little with apprehension, for I cannot endure bloodshed,) as would be that of a Spanish amateur of the art on the eve of a superlatively remorseless display.

The performance, the bills also stated, was to begin at three o'clock precisely, and at half-past one, *Pouly fils, Pouly père, and their quadrille*, accompanied by a band, were to make a triumphant passage through the town. I had forgotten this part of the programme, and was therefore the more surprised, on turning a corner after lunch on Sunday, to come upon two cabs full of bull-fighters, and a waggone packed to the uttermost with instruments of brass and men blow-

ing them. A bull-fighter in a cab is as bizarre a sight as you need look for, especially in Nîmes, for nothing in Nîmes is so shabby as a cab and nothing so splendid as a bull-fighter. There was also the contrast of size, the Nîmes cab being very small and the Nîmes bull-fighter very large,—an enormous fellow, dazzling in scarlet and purple and gold and intensely pink stockings; on this broiling Sunday afternoon a wanton addition to heat that was already almost insupportable.

The cabs were stationary before a *café* (the *Café du Sport* !) and the two Poulys and their companions leaned back in their seats and smoked lazily, gathering in homage with bold roving eyes. Young men, idling about the *café*, pressed forward to shake the heroes by the hand; I saw one offer the burning end of his cigarette for L'Aiglon to take a light from, and, the offer being accepted, tremble beneath the honour. It was a great moment.

And yet there was one unhappy being in the huge crowd. Pouly père was unhappy, and I felt sorry for him. Pouly père wore the look of one who, after years with the key turned, and the chain up, and the bolts shot well home, and untroubled sleep, had heard the younger generation knocking at the door and had perforce opened to it. There was the bitter fact on all the bills:—*Pouly fils, chef, Pouly père, sous-chef*. We who lead ordinary humdrum English lives, with never a bull from January to December, can have no idea what it must be for a hero of the arena (even the Provençale arena) to find himself growing old, and ceding his triumphs to his son. Pouly père had been travelling bulls while his son was in the cradle. That warm Provençale applause, mingled with full-flavoured Provençale wit, had come to be part of his life, and now—

*Pouly fils, chef, Pouly père, sous-chef* !

It was probably at his father's ample knee that Pouly fils learned his picturesque profession. Paternal pride no doubt counts for something on the other side; but to be subordinate to one's own son—that must be hard! And Pouly père looked by no means past his prime; he was immense, with a neck that he might have appropriated from the most magnificent of his victims. His eye was bright; his admirers were many. But it was Pouly fils who rode in the first cab, and whom the young men were jostling each other to shake by the hand.

After a slight difficulty, based on a misunderstanding of heroic status, concerning the payment for the refreshment of one of the lesser heroes, —a hero just on the debatable line between the condition of sometimes paying for oneself and the condition of always being paid for—the procession moved away, to the accompaniment of a too familiar air by Bizet; and the crowd melted into the arena.

I wandered into the arena too; a crumbling relic of the Roman occupation of the Midi, yet, though crumbling, good for hundreds of years still; a beautiful example of the accuracy of the Roman masons' art, with the huge stones, cut to the nicest angles, laid one upon the other without mortar. That was the way to build; the Latin races always understood the art, and understand it still.

By degrees the western half of the arena filled, fathers and mothers and little children in the better seats, and elsewhere soldiers, idlers, and boys. The sun blazed on the white stone of the Roman masons; the sky was intensely blue; the boys whistled the eternal CARMEN. At three o'clock a bugle sounded, the eastern doors were flung open, and, again to the strains of the Toreador's Song, in marched the brave men. I ought to

have known by a hundred signs,—the temper of the spectators, the cheapness of the seats, the meagre promises of the bills, for example—that this Course Provençale was nothing; but I had never given it a thought. I am glad I had not; for when those six glittering figures marched in, with their brilliant cloaks on their shoulders and that careless Southern insolence in their mien, I found myself thrilling to a new emotion. Really it was rather splendid.

Right across the arena they came, while the people clamoured and cheered. Then pausing before the dais, they bowed, and flung their cloaks with a fine *abandon* to fortunate occupants of the front seats, who (with pride also) spread them over the railing,—all except Pouly fils; he flung his to the bugler on the dais. There was a brief lull, while they provided themselves with pale pink cloths, and took up their places here and there in the arena. The bugle sounded again. The moment was coming.

The spectators stiffened a little (I was conscious of it) all round the building, as a smaller gate at the far end was thrown open. We waited nearly a minute, and then in trotted (trotted!) a blunt-nosed little bull with wide horns and a wandering inquiring eye. If it had only rushed in, or paused at the threshold with any air of arrogance, its size would have been a matter apart; but to trot in and to be no bigger than a St. Bernard! The pity of it! It was as though one had seen with one's own eyes the mountain bring forth the mouse.

Pouly père, however, was above such regrets. One course and one only lies open to that simple mind when a bull enters an arena; he has to perform a particular feat of his own, of which his son shall never

deprive him. No sooner was the bull well in the midst than Pouly père prepared for his achievement. He seized a long pole, striped like a barber's, and hurried to meet the bull. Not divining his odd intention, "Do they harry them with poles?" I asked myself. But no; Pouly père's purpose was more original, more pacific. Having shouted sufficiently to annoy and attract the bull, he awaited its rush upon him, and then, as it reached him, grounded the pole, leaped lightly over its charging body, and fled to the barrier, a figure of delight. The spectators cheered to the full, and Pouly père, smiling with satisfaction, bowed to us all. He had performed his great feat; he had drawn first applause; he was not so old, so useless, after all.

The real business now began; one after the other the members of the *quadrille* waved cloths in the bull's face, and, running backwards as he charged, lured him right to the barrier, which they then vaulted, leaving him enraged and bewildered on the other side. If only the hint could be communicated to these little creatures that if they ran straight they would get the man! But waver they will, following always the divagations of the cloth; and therein lies the man's advantage and safety. The Course was like that all the time; furious but unsustained and impotent charges on the part of the bulls, and continual and sometimes quite unjustifiable leaps over the barrier on the part of the heroes. The irritation to the bulls was very trivial; they were not hurt at all, and little harm was done. The Humane Society might visit the spectacle and be untroubled by the discomfiture of the bull, although the impact of the entertainment on themselves might perhaps provide material for reflection. In the South, however, the effect of spectacles on

the spectator is not a prominent subject for thought. To return to the bulls' injuries; beyond two fugitive pricks as the *bandelliras* entered their shoulders, and one more when the ribbon was momentarily fixed between them, they were not asked to suffer, except in dignity; and they made six fat men perform sufficient feats of activity to adjust the balance.

Pouly *fil*s was by far the most capable of the company: his eye was steadier, his nerve stronger, he jumped the barrier as seldom as possible. Indeed, now and then, as he stood with firmly planted feet in the middle of the arena, avoiding the rushes of the bull merely by movements of his body, it was impossible not to admire him. I shall never forget his expression of triumphing content, and the proud controlling gesture with which he raised his left hand, on the completion of each feat, the signal to the spectators to take him at his own valuation.

Pouly *fil*s reserved to himself the right of all the most dramatic moments; but the pole-jump,—that he left to his father. There were five bulls altogether, and Pouly *père* jumped over all. But I fear that a touch of ridicule (which possibly he did not perceive,—I hope not—) came into the applause as he descended to earth after his fifth flight. Poor Pouly *père*! Yet a slight compensation came to him. At the end a little body of roughs carried Pouly *fil*s from the arena in what was intended to be a triumphant march, but which, owing to defective handling, was merely uncomfortable for Pouly and grotesque to everyone else. Pouly *père*, stepping mincingly behind (compelled to a short step by the air from CARMEN) watched his son's struggles with a saturnine expression which I seemed to under-

stand. As one grows older it is the more easy to find oneself on the side of the fathers.

And here I ought perhaps to say a word for the quadrille. They leaped too, as we were promised in the bills; but not until Pouly *père* had accomplished his particular feat. Once Pouly *père*'s honourable bulk was safely transported over the bull, that animal was anyone's game to jump as he would. Gras cleared him at a run, without a pole, as if he were a hurdle; while Saumur turaed a somersault in mid air, taking the bull long ways, so to speak. In the real thing, I imagine, there is less acrobatic activity. To jump over the bull that one is about to kill is to put it to too much indignity. But I may be mistaken.

Though five bulls had been harried and the Poulys and their quadrille had disappeared in triumph, the performance was not yet done. The departure of the bull-fighters was the signal for some fifty young bloods to leap into the arena, where they waited until the door of the bull-department was again opened and a perplexed and unwilling creature issued forth. At first I did not recognise its genus, but inspection proved it to be also a bull, made unfamiliar by having its horns carefully encased in cloths and padded at the tips. Between its horns was a rosette, the game being to snatch this away. The scene that ensued was absurd enough. The bull, a harmless, good-natured animal, had no wish in the world to injure anyone, and its rushes were therefore very mild; but the boys were there to qualify, every one of them, for a Pouly *fil*s, and therefore it behoved them to take the situation seriously. Thus on the one side we had a bored and flippant bull, with no thought but to get back to its hay, and on the other half a



hundred incipient bull-fighters in deadly earnest, leaping the barrier as numerous and simultaneously as grasshoppers in an Alpine meadow. This lasted for twenty minutes, when, no one having secured the rosette, the decoy cow trotted in, the padded bull followed it through the gates, and our Sunday afternoon's sport was over.

## II.—THE FAIR.

FAIRS have always had a quite improper fascination for me. I still remember the disappointment I suffered on a visit to Bedford a quarter of a century ago, on discovering that the statue, of which so much had been said, was a statue of John Bunyan and not, as I in my half knowledge of words had supposed and passionately hoped, a statue (*statue*) fair such as we had every August in our own town; a fair of unearthly light and variety, where fat women displayed incredible shoulders, and (one year) a forlorn seal in a foot-bath was all that met the gaze in fulfilment of an exterior promise concerning the most wonderful sight in the universe, a living mermaid. In spite of such individual disenchantments as the seal, the fair in the aggregate was the most considerable thing in life. The flaring lights, the noise, the swings, the roundabouts, the shooting-galleries, the gingerbread-stalls, the squirts of scented water, the mystery of every booth, the caravans in which these people dwelt, their open-road, open-heath existence, the incessant change and bustle of it all,—these things made up a pleasure that intoxicated me then, and even to this day is to be resisted only by a great effort. At Nîmes, on the Sunday evening following the Course Provençale, I certainly made no effort to resist it.

One of the few living novelists who come to their calling with due seriousness (in his case a seriousness that is almost rapturous), talking the other night about the extraordinary success of a certain fellow-writer (against whose attitude to the art of fiction a similar charge could never be brought), said that after long study of the subject he had come to believe that the popularity of a novel depended entirely on the extent to which it resembled a fair. Unless a novel have drums and lights and peep-shows, he declared, it will never pass into editions. The fair is the symbol; it is the people's favourite amusement in life, and the closer that fiction approximates to it the better will they be pleased. "I am afraid," he added wistfully, "there is not enough peepshow in the book I am just finishing." Probably he was right. The fair is the oldest form of entertainment, and the fair we must have. That I myself want it I have made perhaps too clear; although I want the other thing too. I want that novelist's forthcoming book, for example; but a fair will always fascinate.

France understands fairs better than we do. The best fair I ever saw was at Bordeaux, where I made the acquaintance of my first and (to the present time) last giant. I forget all his name except Jock,—it was eleven years ago—but his picture and his person I shall never forget. They bore a closer resemblance than is common in fairs, but there was, as seems obligatory, just enough disparity to cause one to speculate on the chances that a realist showman would have, should one by a miracle arise. Would ruin necessarily stare him in the face? My giant's showman, for example, (for, poor fellow, Jock was not his own master, but belonged, body and soul, to the owner of the tent,) would it have

been fatal for him had he depicted Jock as he was rather than as an over-nourished grenadier leaning negligently against a lamp-post to light his cigar at the jet! That made him ten feet high at the least; whereas he was something just under eight. Yet, as a curiosity, eight should be enough. In the matter of the mermaid-seal a mendacious artist was of course a necessity; but eight feet of man in a world where five feet odd is the average should be sufficient to tempt realism.

However, there he was, as the legend beneath the picture ran, *The Tallest Soldier in the British Army*, and I paid my ten centimes and entered. Others entered too, and when there were enough of us the giant stoopingly emerged from the back compartment, and slowly unfolded himself to his ridiculous full height. His face was unmistakably English, and as unmistakably the face of a very sick man, a large, dreary, pale, loose face. His red tunic was a world too big for him; he was a giant only in height; a dwarf could have knocked him down. On his head he wore a bearskin, to add to the military illusion; and he got his hand up to the salute laboriously, as though every muscle were stretched and limp. We walked erect under his outstretched arm, dropped coins in the tin box that he proffered with an importunate rattle, and the show was over,—for all except me. I could not let him go without a word, and he asked me to come inside where it was warm, and talk.

I followed him into the tiny compartment at the back of the tent. He sank wearily into a chair, threw away his bearskin, and sat there, a dejected monster, with the stove between his knees. He came from Lincolnshire, he said, and had never been in the British army. He

shivered over the stove as he warmed his vast hands. We talked about Lincolnshire a little, and then of himself; he said that his life was a hell, especially on the road; his employer allowed him to walk out only furtively, late at night and in lonely places, for a giant whose inches are his fortune must not be seen. He was clearly in a late stage of consumption, as so many giants are in this decadent day, and he would not be sorry when the end came. After so many years in a circumscribed caravan and a low-pitched tent, the grave must have appealed to him mainly as a place where limbs could be stretched without let. We parted good friends, and I visited him every day for a week and carried him ship's tobacco and a bottle; but never did a gleam of life flit across the bleak and snowy regions of his face. Perhaps he still lives to give the peasantry of France a false idea of the size of the British soldier; but I fear not. Certainly he was not at Nîmes last month.

I went down the double line of booths four or five times, but no giant held audience there. Fat women, miscalled giantesses, I saw, and a dwarf, but never a giant. I entered every booth; it was impossible to do otherwise. I waited my turn to look through defective lenses at the most atrocious French murders; I saw a moving waxwork group (very popular) representing a British officer disarming a Boer farmer with every circumstance of insolence, and another group representing a Boer hospital in active working condition, with a soldier's leg being amputated by a meat-saw in the foreground; I saw a fat confectioner in a white cap make several thousand of the sweets known as bullseyes in less than five minutes; I saw the temptation of St. Anthony as performed by marionettes, the

tampress being (as in a similar, or the same, theatre at Bordeaux eleven years ago) a sucking-pig; and I saw a young woman who confessed to three legs, the feet of which she displayed very modestly, a young woman with the most perfect self-possession I have ever witnessed. It was no small achievement under a fire of sceptical criticism by a dozen caustic wits. She was rather pretty and quite young, and there she sat, without the faintest tinge of emotion, until they began to show signs of exhaustion. Then, "*Merci, messieurs,*" she said, very sweetly, and dropped the curtain, and we filed out. After all, when one has three legs and can make money by the gift, one can afford to be tolerant.

But the most wonderful thing that I saw was the people. They thronged the place and almost fought to get into a trumpery booth where a scoundrel of a negro was displaying with

infinite contortions his countrymen's method of prayer. Nothing was too trivial for them to see. Fathers and mothers convoyed their families from one absurd show to another with a keenness I have never seen exceeded. Old men and old women struggled just like children; and now I come to think about it, I was one of the crowd too.

The fair is certainly the thing. No other form of entertainment is so comprehensive; no other form makes such a claim on the eternal child within us. Here, however, in England, we are not quite such children as the French,—partly to our gain and partly to our loss—and the fair proper has lost some of its hold. It has not lost enough, however, to imperil the popularity of many a novel that at this moment is being ingeniously manufactured.

E. V. LUCAS.

## WHAT IS TRUTH?

As the abrupt mid-day shadows slowly lengthened, the talk drifted into discussion and thence into argument. It turned on the old question of truth, whereof some say the vision has been seen, long ages since, in the beginning of the world and must be sought for, like the Grail, until the end of time. The passengers on board the steamship ORIZABA drew one after another round the streak of sunlight which pierced through the side awning of the vessel, and lay between the disputants like the subject of their argument. In the scorching atmosphere of the Red Sea a haziness of all things in heaven and earth, moral, mental, and physical, seemed to rise from the very vividness of light and heat. The magnificence of the theme made it seem too great for the weary minds that strove to grasp it. Then, as thought after thought was caught at, shaped, and passed from one to the other, the question gained a certain definiteness. "Does the end in any case justify the means?" "May not a fact be represented falsely, and abstract truth be thereby the gainer?" "May a false statement be uttered by a true witness?" And half in languor, half in zeal, the discussion continued, until one woman, who had been silent, found her voice and spoke. She spoke as one speaks who sees conclusions clearly. She was an old woman, and her voice was rough with the accents of the country where her life had been spent. She had been brought up in the Australian Bush, but being born of English parents, she was travelling "home" to see her "people"

before she died. Beyond and deeper than the harshness of her voice rang the conviction which gave it earnestness, as she closed her short appeal for literal truthfulness with the challenge which St. Paul hurled of old,— "Can the truth of God abound through my lie unto His glory?"

The speaker had held the eyes of her audience, but as they drifted back to the ray of sunlight, as to their central and natural resting-place, they became aware that the ray had vanished. It was blotted out by a man standing against the bulwarks in the full glow of the sun. Even the sudden gloom beneath the awning could not hide the age and misery of his features. Yet, despite this double claim on human sympathy, the face was marked by so strange a mingling of emotions, that it filled most of those who saw it with a curious sense of repulsion. Anger strove with self-pity, fear with entreaty; and all these were governed by a hope so fierce, so immediate, and so full of unrest, that it might have been a craving for physical relief, or possibly for a conviction once held and forfeited. The sunken eyes, with all this demand in them, were turned towards the woman who had last spoken. On her face the light of enthusiasm was sinking into the repose which was its abiding charm. These two, alone of those present, had reached the border from whence men look back upon life. The similarity of age marked the force of the contrast; it was marked afresh by the silence with which he left them. They waited as respectfully on his silence

as they had waited on her words ; but they waited in vain. The longing and the hope died from out his eyes, and he seemed almost to fade from their midst. He slunk away like a beast ashamed. The ray of sunlight held its place once more.

The interest which the man had aroused lingered a little while when he himself had left. Questions were asked and it became known, through the ship's officers, that he was a not infrequent traveller. His name was Farrel, a man of learning, travelling, it was believed, to collect or study manuscripts ; but some, who had met him previously, were inclined to doubt the learning, and to hint that manuscripts had no existence save in his disordered brain.

"There is a scholar named Farrel," said a passenger thoughtfully, "or was. I've not heard of his death, but he has published nothing for several years."

After that the conversation changed, but it it was not forgotten by the last speaker.

This man, John Presgrave, though born a lover of books, had been destined to rule men as a Bengal Civilian. He had never forgotten his first love, and had beguiled his loneliness and relieved the arduous nature of his duties by following the history of biblical criticism. In this manner he had known Dr. Farrel's name well, as one whose scholarship had been held in great repute about the middle of the century then drawing to a close. Then his influence had begun to wane. He had spent some years in preparing with laborious patience a critical edition of the New Testament, and had the mortification of seeing its value discounted by the discovery of fresh manuscripts, notably the Codex Sinaiticus. He received this discovery with an amount of obstinate suspicion which threw discredit on

his own ability. He had been one of the revisers of the New Testament, but his lack of critical acumen weakened the authority to which his great learning would have entitled him. Many times he found himself in a minority of one. On one occasion in particular, which Presgrave recollected, his disregard of reason and of the best manuscripts appeared to his colleagues little less than astounding. Presgrave had long been convinced that the solution to this problem lay in the personal equation ; for which cause, and for another, he had often wished to meet Farrel. The latter had stood almost alone in pleading for the conditional retention of the doxology as part of the original version of the Lord's Prayer. Presgrave loved the grand and rhythmic sentences, and for their sakes alone could have forgiven much to their defender.

Presgrave watched his chance for speaking to Dr. Farrel, and found the scholar's reserve give way more readily than he had expected. Presgrave alluded to his writings, and though the old man at first turned away, he turned back and asked eagerly, "Have you read them?" Presgrave had, and spoke warmly of the labour bestowed on them. The old man listened wistfully to the praise ; it was the language of his youth, long since unheard. In a few minutes they had plunged into a discussion, and were talking of versions, cursives, and uncials, as men talk to whom letters are as the air they breathe. Thus Presgrave touched on the secret of the man's life. It was unintentional at first. He chanced to ask why Farrel had defended the verse on the three Witnesses (First Epistle of John v. 7) contrary even to the evidence of the Syrian manuscripts. The change in the old man's face warned him, but he did not hesitate, and that night he made

Farrel tell him his history. Possibly the telling of it saved the scholar's brain.

Farrel began by speaking with some vehemence against his fellow-labourers in the work of revision. "These men," and he mentioned two well-known revisers, "have talent and learning enough, but they pay little attention to the dictates of a literary conscience. They are moved by some impulse beyond reason and judgment; and they showed it most on the question of the three Witnesses."

Presgrave had no difficulty in understanding him. In the fifth chapter of the first Epistle of John is a verse which speaks of the threefold witness of "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." This verse is omitted in the Revised Version, and with much reason, for it is not to be found in any of the older manuscripts from whence we get our Bible. Yet to save this verse Farrel had adduced plea after plea, tilting desperately against the wise and learned arguments of his opponents. When he realised at length that argument was useless, his only hope lay in the discovery of fresh manuscripts, of which many, as scholars believe, are still awaiting to reward further search, preserved by the dryness of the Egyptian climate.

Inspired by this hope Farrel made his arrangements. He gave up the appointment which he had held for years at Oxford, and made his way to Egypt, concealing his object, meaning to proclaim it only when he returned triumphant. It was characteristic of the intensity, as of the narrowness, of his convictions that he never doubted that the manuscripts, if found, would contain the verse which witnessed to the doctrine of the Trinity. It was the testimony of this verse to a triune God which made him exaggerate its importance out of

all proportion. He held Theism, not without reason, to be more dangerous to Christianity than absolute infidelity; and it was Theism which he believed himself to be fighting.

Of his search through the dens and caves of the earth, he said nothing, though it lasted three years; but of his moment of success he spoke at length. In a monastery in the Nitrian Desert he came at last on the object of his search; a roll of yellow papyrus about ten inches long which opened with the first words of the first Epistle of John. The outermost of the wooden rollers was gone: it had been used by the lay-brother in the kitchen, perhaps as a rolling-pin or pestle; but the papyrus had been preserved, and lay in Farrel's hand. The stress of a lifetime of toil and argument, and of three years of wearying personal search, seemed crowded into thirty seconds as he unrolled the brittle record. His eye devoured the familiar words written in the clear running cursive characters that are found even on the earliest papyrus. He held the roll in his right hand and drew it out with his left, until the end of the writing was reached and the last column was spread before the scholar's eyes. And the fifth, and last, chapter of John's Epistle rolled to the end without the verse which speaks of the "three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost."

Whether that which then happened was accidental or not Farrel himself could never say, though he had often and vigorously searched both conscience and memory. His right hand let the wooden roller fall, and as it fell it broke away from the brittle papyrus, tearing the last column and a half from the rest. The unfinished papyrus that the scholar held then could throw no light on the disputed passage. Farrel made his way back



to the room which had been assigned to his use in the monastery; in one hand he held the sacred roll, in the other, the roller with the last column still attached to it. The portmantau which held his scanty travelling-kit lay open on the ground; he thrust the roll deep down into a corner of it, covering it with his clothes. And then he gazed vacantly at the last fragment.

It needs fifty years of textual research to understand all that Farrel experienced that night. He would have given ten years of his life at any moment for such a manuscript as this,—and now he had found it! The very age and value of it increased the strength of its evidence against the truth. Could it be right, he argued the point again and again to himself, to bring facts to light which gave colour to false doctrine? Might not the truth of God abound through his lie unto God's glory? And unable to find an answer to his questions he crept up and down, backwards and forwards, in front of the little brazier of coals. All was dark save for the coals in the brazier, and in him was no light save the fire of desire; and the fierceness of that longing he mistook for light. Then the thing which shaped itself for him to do appeared first as a holy duty, and next as a sin. "I thought myself the angel of the Lord at least," he said to Presgrave in the bitterness of his sincerity. "I know now that I grudged Z—— his victory."

When the grey dawn began to break, the last embers glowed in the brazier of coals. For one moment they flamed up afresh; they flamed over a roller of wood from which the sap had ebbed seventeen or eighteen centuries ago, and over a smooth yellow fragment made of reeds that had once grown on the banks of the Nile. A few minutes later a ray of yellow light showed an old man raking

despairingly among the ashes; for a flood of conviction had entered into his soul, and the sun had risen.

Then began those weary wanderings the duration of which Farrel could not tell. A feverish restlessness drove him about the world, for at every place where he lingered the inanimate objects became articulate with the knowledge of his secret. He turned from every eye, believing it possessed the power to read the history which it was his torture to conceal. He could not reconcile himself to keeping from mankind the knowledge of the manuscript which he rightly held to be not his own but a human inheritance; yet he shrank from what seemed the more positive falsehood of giving a mutilated text to the world and holding back the history of its discovery.

"I never part from it, though it burns me to touch it. There,—you may see it,—no one else ever has;" and he thrust a dirty roll into the Civilian's hands. Even Presgrave accustomed, as he thought himself, to the changes and chances of human life, could scarcely control his own excitement as he handled that thin, yellow, crackling roll. It was perfect, save that the last two columns had been broken away, and the last verses were missing, as its discoverer had said. He begged to be allowed to keep the manuscript for the night, but the scholar could not bring himself to part with it. When they shook hands Presgrave was bold to fancy that a new warmth, the warmth of returning fellowship with his kind, inspired those cold and palsied fingers. But the effort of confession had been too great for the soul that had dwelt so long in loneliness. In the morning when Presgrave came to look for his friend, he had vanished, none knew whither. He could not face again the man that knew his secret. The

vessel had touched at Port Said at daybreak, and the black figure had faded into the haze of the East.

Some months later Mr. Presgrave gratified an old wish to spend some weeks in Rome, intending, as his natural bent directed, to study the sacred manuscripts in the Vatican. He had sufficient interest to obtain the necessary permission, and, after some preliminary interviews, found himself within the precincts of the famous palace. As he was led through the long corridors and galleries many figures passed him be-frocked and girded. He paid little heed to them until his attention was arrested by one man whom he met somewhat suddenly, coming out of the shade of a dark passage. The man was bareheaded, and a light from above shone on the bald head and clear-cut features the more strongly in contrast to the darkness behind. Presgrave started, and as he did so, he fancied that the man's face likewise changed; but he passed on, and Presgrave, following his guide, wondered if he had really just missed a recognition, or whether the extraordinary deathliness of the features would alone have sufficed to excite his imagination.

When he had finished his studies, he asked if there had been any additions lately made to their manuscripts. He was told that he had seen all that it was possible to show him; but he had scarcely left Rome and returned to London before the civilised world was ringing with the news of the discovery of a papyrus manuscript, a nearly perfect copy of the first Epistle of John. It had been discovered and brought as an offering to the Pope by the famous

English scholar, Dr. Farrel; "the offering," to quote the Pope's declaration, being "a fit atonement for a life of heresy, and the discoverer had been now received into the Roman Communion." The face that Presgrave had seen in the Vatican returned to his mind, answering the questions that it had aroused; but it did not answer them fully. The face that he had seen had been the face of a dying man. Was it possible,—the thought crystallised slowly, and against his will for he was half ashamed of it,—that a man should give his life for his soul's peace, and how would such sacrifice avail at the last? And then, with a sudden wave of admiration, he recognised how terrible must have been the remorse which could wring such a submission from that proud dogmatic spirit. After that he could neither judge nor criticise; he felt that he could only stand aside and watch, as a man stands bare-headed before the passing of a bier.

After a few days, like a wind sweeping westward, came from the Vatican the rumour of Farrel's death. It was followed by a statement, formally published with the sanction of the Heads of the Roman Church, and published, it was added, in accordance with a promise to the dying penitent. Throughout Europe, but especially in England, the story evoked surprise, comment, and criticism. Yet a few there were, here and there, in places unlooked for taught in suffering and wise to understand; and these, having loved truth and served her dearly, felt that they knew but the shadow of her own preciousness to the man who had wronged her.

## THE FREE STATE BOER.

BY AN IMPERIAL YEOMAN, LATELY A PRISONER-OF-WAR.

It was at an interesting and a critical time that I first got to know the Free State Boer. I was unfortunate enough to be taken prisoner early in June, 1900, when De Wet had just made his dramatic descent upon the line, and shattered at a blow the hopes that had been entertained in many quarters that Lord Roberts's proclamation would have permanent results, and that the men of the Free State had practically relinquished the struggle. A very few days before the attack upon Roodeval and Rhénoster we had been assured that the Free State was to all intents and purposes quiet, that day by day arms in increasing numbers were being brought in and their owners granted passes to return to their farms, and that very little further trouble was to be expected in that part of the country. We know now that none of these hopes and anticipations were to be justified; long months have rolled by, but De Wet, after having been repeatedly surrounded, still remains at liberty, and seems to be able to repair his depleted legions when and in what part of the country he wills. But early in June last no one dreamed that the war was to be so protracted. It was confidently held that after Lord Roberts's triumphal march through the country all opposition would be crushed or melt away into nothingness before him.

That was the opinion entertained on our side; what of the other? Naturally, when I found myself in the hands of the enemy, I took every

opportunity of ascertaining what their ideas were on the subject, and perhaps quite as naturally I found them diametrically opposed to those entertained by myself. A great number of them frankly owned that there could be but one ending to the war; but they would not agree with me that the beginning of the end was in sight. They argued that their power of resistance was very little impaired by Lord Roberts's advance through the centre of the country; as for the British occupying Bloemfontein, what of that? It was not their business to defend the towns; they did their fighting on the *veldt* and in the *kopjes*, and we should find that we had yet plenty of work before us. Indeed they freely criticised Lord Roberts's tactics, and said that it puzzled them to understand what he was about in going right through the centre of the country, leaving them unmolested to watch his movements from the fastnesses on his flanks. Of course one could scarcely expect them to appreciate, or at all events, if they did, to acknowledge that they appreciated, the moral effect of pushing on to Pretoria with all possible speed; but they argued their case with an amount of intelligence and logic which I, for one, never expected to find in them.

The plain truth of the matter is that in setting down the Free State Boers as a lot of simpletons,—which, so far as I have been able to judge, was the opinion formed of them by most English people—we fell into a very grievous error. The Free State

Boer,—I speak of the real Boer, and not of the dweller in towns, who is altogether different—is untutored and simple as is the rustic in every part of the globe. Of the things that we know he often knows little or nothing; and he cares little or nothing at all about the doings of the outside world. Ignorant he may be; a fool he certainly is not. He has a native shrewdness which is no poor substitute for acquired knowledge; and, as is almost invariably the case with men who have lived their lives in close contact with Nature, who have marked her moods and her changes, who have allowed nothing in the blue sky and the green earth to escape their notice, he seems intuitively to have a knowledge of human nature often denied to those whose means of attaining it, one would think, must have been infinitely greater. Situated as he often is miles from any town and the railway, it is not surprising that his interests are narrow, and that he troubles his head little about anything that does not immediately affect himself; but when any new facts are placed before him, he surprises one by his quick apprehension and ready grasp of facts. Particularly is this the case with the older men, who have retained much of the ancient simplicity and primitive habits of the race. Many of the younger men have forsaken the ways of their fathers, and, turning their backs on the wide *veldt*, have been beguiled by the doubtful allurements of the town. In them one finds the superficial smartness, and the thinly veiled brutal arrogance, which are characteristic in our own country of a certain type of town-dwelling rustics who affects to despise the tillers of the soil from whom he sprung. But they can in no wise be regarded as typical of their class.

I had often heard that one of the

most prominent traits in the character of the Free State Boer was his large-hearted hospitality. Men who had known him years ago have often informed me how, when travelling over the *veldt*, they could find lodging and food for themselves and their horses at almost any farmhouse, and when in the morning they offered payment, it would be almost invariably refused. I can well believe this after my own experience. During nearly the whole of the time I was a prisoner my captors were hard pressed by our troops; food was scarce, and such luxuries as coffee and sugar were very rare indeed, even at the first, and later on were hardly to be obtained at all. Yet whatever they had (I speak of the individual and not of the authorities), they would give you out of their own little store. Not once, but a score of times I have approached a friendly guard and offered to purchase some flour, biscuit, coffee, or sugar; only once or twice has the offer been accepted. In the other cases the burgher has either given freely what he could spare, or else replied that he had none. As for tobacco, it has often happened that when I have asked a man to sell me some, he has promptly pulled out a twist from his pocket, and cutting it in two, handed me half, or given me a handful from his pouch. Any one who has been on the *veldt*, or has seen campaigning in any other country, will be able to approve such generosity at its proper value, especially when it is remembered what a confirmed smoker the Boer is.

Perhaps nothing surprised me more than the feeling most of them entertained towards ourselves. I had expected to find bitter animosity; I found instead a feeling of friendliness which, if not very cordial, was, considering the circumstances, highly

remarkable. Now and again I heard denunciations of British policy, sarcastic references to our habit of increasing the size of the Empire; but such dislike as there was, was directed against the British Government, and did not extend to the individual. On the contrary, a great number of them said that they had many friends among our people; they had lived side by side with them and engaged in business with them for years, and had always been on good terms with them; they were only sorry that things should have come to this pass. On the other hand their feeling towards the European-bred Dutchman was very bitter; he could never be mentioned without eliciting expressions of hatred, contempt and scorn. The reason for this is not hard to find; I shall have something to say about that presently when dealing with another side of the Free State Boer's character.

It was pleasant to find how much respect and reverence was entertained by the Free State Boer for Queen Victoria. Here again the feeling was particularly pronounced among the older men and women; in many farm-houses one might observe pictures of her Majesty and of Oom Paul hung facing one another. The character of our late beloved Sovereign, her reputation for the domestic virtues, her ever-ready sympathy for the suffering and oppressed, and the real religion which was at the root of all her good qualities, appealed forcibly to such a people; and as an old Boer said to me one day, "Some of our people may hate the British, but all of us love and honour your Queen." The same old fellow, —a veritable patriarch he was, full seventy years old, but hale and hearty with long snowy beard and bald head —was much perplexed at the Queen allowing this war to go on. Surely,

he argued, the gracious Lady must be averse from bloodshed, and must desire that peace should crown the closing years of her life; why did she not stop it? I tried to explain to him that, however anxious our Queen might be for peace, her first care would be to uphold the dignity and honour of the Empire, which had been so grievously outraged by the invasion of her territories; also that in such matters she was guided by the advice of her Ministers, who represented the feeling of the people. The latter aspect of the matter was, however, quite lost upon him; was not the Queen supreme over everyone, he asked? I gave it up at last; he was evidently unable to understand the mysteries of a limited monarchy, to see that the head of a State like ours possessed really far less power than the head of a Republic such as his own. He and his people had been accustomed to regard as beyond question the mandate of his pastors and masters, however repugnant to their own convictions, and one could pardon him for thinking that a similar condition of things prevailed elsewhere.

It may well be asked how it was, in the face of the Free State Boers' friendliness towards the English and reverence for the person of her Majesty, that they came to throw in their lot with their kinsmen from across the Vaal. There can be very little question that the majority of them were opposed to the war, until they had been worked upon by the specious arguments and false representations of those to whom they had been accustomed to look for guidance. From the President downwards, all those in authority in the Free State entered into a conspiracy to delude the poor farmers who did not and could not know the real issues involved. It has been openly stated

that Mr. Steyn was directly bought with Transvaal gold, and that many other leaders were also bribed; whether this be the case or not, I am unable from my own knowledge to state, but there is no denying the fact that they must, in most cases, have had some ulterior object in encouraging the burghers to enter upon a struggle to which they knew full well there could be but one end. They knew it, if the burghers did not, and they traded upon that ignorance. But worse than all has been the unworthy part played by many of the pastors, who have shrunk from no falsehoods, however ridiculous to us, though implicitly believed in by their flocks, to attain the end they had in view.

Is it to be wondered at, then, that the burghers, shrewd and keen as they are in the ordinary affairs of life, accustomed to take for granted what was told them by their pastors and masters, yielding them the same sort of obedience as did the English rustic in the last century to the squire and the parson, never doubted for an instant when they were told that, unless they resisted to the utmost, their country would be taken from them by the English? Resistance was preached to them as a sacred duty, and the appeal was not made in vain. It is true that England did not immediately threaten their country; but they were told that they would come next, that if England beat the Transvaalers, she would never be content until all South Africa was hers. Bound by every tie of blood and sentiment to the Transvaal as they were, such preaching could not fail to have its effect upon the Free State Boers; they felt that by abstaining from the struggle not only would they be deserting their kinsmen in their hour of need, but they would also tend to precipitate

the extinction of their own independence.

And when the die had been cast, when the tide of invasion had been swept back from Natal and Cape Colony, when Lord Roberts had entered the capital of the Transvaal, and when the Free Staters, many of whom had been placed in the forefront of the fighting around Ladysmith, saw their own capital in the hands of the British, still lie upon lie was disseminated in order to make them prolong the hopeless struggle. No effort was spared in order to deter them from taking advantage of Lord Roberts's leniency. In many remote districts nothing was accurately known of the proclamation which gave them a chance at the eleventh hour. Many of the burghers were informed of its general import by others who had recently visited some of the larger towns, but they sought their leaders in vain for enlightenment. They were told that the proclamation was but a trick on the part of the English to procure their surrender. If once they nibbled the bait, it was said, their homes would see them no more; the pledge that they would be allowed to return to their farms would not be kept; they would be sent out of the country, to St. Helena, or to some other inaccessible place, where they might languish for years. It is small wonder that such counsels had weight with the Free Staters, accustomed as they had ever been to place implicit reliance on those in authority. The idea of being sent away was what frightened them most, for their love of their own country, of their homes and the soil of their fathers, is very real and striking. It is easy enough to say that they had ample opportunities of finding out the truth, that they could judge what was likely to be their own fate by that of their



fellows who had given up their arms; but remember the difficulties that lay in the path of the man who wanted to surrender. First, it was no easy task for him to get away from his commando, and if he managed to do so, he ran the risk of being treated as a deserter were he ever to fall into the hands of his late comrades. And apart from this there was the feeling, the natural feeling, that he would be committing a base act in deserting the sinking ship, that although he had been from the first averse from the course his countrymen were taking, now that they had taken it, he must stand by them to the finish. Your Free State Boer is not without a share of sentiment in his composition.

The proclamation was without doubt an absolute failure. As I have already indicated, it was quite impossible for the bulk of the burghers to read it for themselves, and thus they remained ignorant of what had been Lord Roberts's offer. Those who were cognisant and who promptly obtained passes, consisted roughly of two classes,—men who never had the slightest intention of keeping their pledges, and men who meant to abide loyally by their word. That the former were by no means few in number I am prepared to admit, but I do not believe that they were so numerous as people imagine. On the other hand, there is no question that of those who were in the field in June and afterwards many had passes in their possession; but the question is what proportion of them had come out again on compulsion. The Free Stater who had surrendered, delivered up his arms, and obtained the necessary permission to return to his farm, speedily found himself in a very awkward position. Sooner or later a commando would

come to the neighbourhood of his farm, he would be visited by a field-cornet or some other official, and be ordered to come along with the rest. What was he to do? To acknowledge that he had a pass might mean ruin; he would be forced under fear of his life to accompany the commando, and his farm would be looted. On the other hand, if he kept the compromising fact to himself and made some excuse for being at home, he would merely be told to join the commando and his property would be unmolested. That there were many such men with De Wet I speedily discovered. And I do not think I shall be accused of rating my own powers of discrimination too highly when I say that I was soon able to judge between the genuine pass-holder and the spurious. It was no uncommon thing to find a man, who in the presence of others was surly and inclined to give short answers to my attempts to induce him to enter into a conversation, leading me afterwards mysteriously aside and producing the fateful piece of dirty paper. I exhorted many of these gentry on the folly and criminality of their conduct, and got for answer what I have just stated. They could not help it, they urged; they had been forced, and they expressed a good deal of lingering anxiety to know how our authorities would treat them should they fall into their hands. Of course it may be, as has been often suggested to me by sceptics to whom I have related these things, that all this, and much more of the same sort, was only intended to enlist my sympathies in case the tables should one day be turned, and it might lie in my power to do my present guard a good turn. It may have been so, but the explanation seems to me a little far-fetched.

As time wore on, it became apparent that the minds of the majority, or, at all events, of very many of the Free Staters, were undergoing a radical change. As Abraham Lincoln said, "You can't fool all the people all the time;" and so shrewd a people as this could not remain much longer in ignorance of the manner in which they had been betrayed. As the shoe began to pinch, as rations became shorter and the circle around them on the eastern side of the country grew daily narrower, they began to reflect on the things they had been told by the prisoners and others, and the words of their leaders no longer moved them with the old force. It began to dawn upon them that they had engaged not merely in an unprovoked and wanton struggle, but in a struggle also which could only end disastrously to themselves. It was curious about this time, when Prinsloo was making his last stand in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem (we prisoners, by the way, were some miles south of Slabbets Nek, at a place where we had a capital view of the shelling), to watch the workings of their minds, to follow the complete reversal of the convictions once so tenaciously held. It was hard for them to acknowledge that their faith in their leaders and in their cause had been shattered; but to acknowledge it they were forced, and many did, in spite of themselves. Their expressions of contempt and scorn for their kinsmen of the Transvaal, who had led them to their undoing, were very bitter. They had been used as cats-paws; they had borne the brunt of the fighting all over the country; the Transvaalers had merely made use of them to do the bulk of the dangerous work. There is scarcely a doubt that in the earlier stages of the war it was the policy of many of the Transvaal com-

manders to put the Free Staters in the forefront of every fight and to spare their own men. Notably was this the case around Ladysmith; indeed it was told me as an absolute fact that letters, written by a very eminent personage indeed to the generals, in which this course had been enjoined, had recently fallen into the hands of the Free Staters. The opinion of my captors with regard to the fighting capacity of the men from across the Vaal was by no means flattering to the latter; and many of them had had ample opportunities of judging, having fought all over the country, at Ladysmith, at Kimberley, at Colesberg. Here is a little story which illustrates the general feeling. Said I to a gunner of the Free State Artillery, who arrived at Fouriesburg the day before my imprisonment came to an end, "Have you any news how things are going in the Transvaal?" "No," he replied. "I suppose you know," I said tentatively, "that Lord Roberts has won a great victory some forty miles north of Pretoria, and that eleven hundred Transvaalers have been killed." That was a story going about at the time, and I thought it might get something from him. "That's not true," he promptly rejoined, with a grin. How could he know, I asked, when he had owned that he had no information? Whereupon he again replied: "Oh, I know that can't be right. You might perhaps kill eleven, but you'll never kill eleven hundred Transvaal Boers. They'd never stop for that; if eleven had been killed, no matter how many of them there were, they would be off like greased lightning. The only way such a thing could possibly occur would be by eleven hundred being killed by one shell." That was his opinion and it was shared by most of his fellows whom I sounded upon the subject. It

seems curious enough when we remember what was said before the war, that the Transvaalers would fight, but that the Free Staters had no stomach for the business; but it is also the opinion of most of those who, like myself, have met both in the field.

Towards President Steyn it was also evident that a feeling of something like rancour was cherished. Indeed it was very frequently said that if we could only capture him, the burghers would give in, or, to put it in another way, they were anxious to give in, but could not do so while the author of their misfortunes was at liberty. At the same time there were a sufficient number of stalwarts to render giving him up out of the question had there been any desire to do so. But I think that feeling would hardly have led them to such lengths as this; they would have been glad enough to see Steyn in our hands, but the old feeling of loyalty still retained sufficient hold upon them to prevent such an event occurring through their own deliberate act. Yet Steyn, though loud in his exhortations to the burghers to fight to the death, always took good care not to risk his own precious skin. At this period no one knew for more than a day or two at a time where he was; he would make his appearance at a laager, deliver an impassioned speech and then take himself off, no one knew whither. Possibly he may once or twice have fired a shot,—from a safe spot; but as a rule he kept carefully aloof from places where bullets might be flying. In short, in these days all the wisest and best among the Free Staters were heartily sick of the whole affair, and their sole hope was that it might come to a speedy end. Of course there were some, chiefly raw youths,—for I leave the foreign mercenaries altogether out of my con-

siderations—who had learned nothing and had forgotten nothing, who still hugged to their bosoms delusive notions of foreign intervention, and of driving the English out of the country. A vain braggart set these were, always retailing for the edification of the prisoners some atrociously incredible story with which they had been plied, and never weary of telling us of their individual feats of prowess. If the older men are to be believed, they were by no means so conspicuous on the battle-field. Indeed, a great many of them were not in what we should term the firing-line at all; they moved about from laager to laager, driving waggons, looking after stores and the like, and posing as heroes to all the women they chanced to come across. But, after all, there are individuals of that class in most armies.

It is more than likely that I shall be accused of presenting the Free State Boer in too favourable a light. Certainly I do not regard him unfavourably, and if he made a good impression upon one who formed his acquaintance in such circumstances as I did, the fact speaks well for him. Remember that when I got to know him I was a prisoner in his hands, had to put up with the scantiest of fare, and made one of a crowd who were hurried up and down the country like a herd of cattle. I am not likely therefore to be biassed in his favour. But the treatment I received at the hands of the men,—as distinct from those in authority, who in many cases are not the pure article at all—convinced me that here is a people with whom the task of making friends ought not to be extraordinarily difficult. They have been our friends before; some of them, more perhaps than we know of, have at heart been our friends during the past year of strife; they will be our friends again in the time to come.

I am not blind to their faults. Perhaps the worst of these have their root in an obstinate conservatism, a clinging to the old ways, a fervid abhorrence of anything in the nature of change. The life that their fathers and grandfathers led does very well for them ; they are content to live and die on their farms, content to live in rough comfort and to die with the assurance (not always forthcoming in these latter days) that those they leave behind will walk in their footsteps. Ambition is a thing they know nothing of ; the advantages of wealth, and all that money can give to its possessor, do not seem to appeal one jot to the bulk of them. They are constitutionally idle, and much averse from manual labour, as is indeed the case in any country where it is the custom to employ natives to perform all the more arduous work ; and they are inclined to take things very easily, to let their land practically look after itself, and to be satisfied with what Dame Nature graciously yields them.

If times are hard and comforts scarce, the Boer takes his bad fortune philosophically ; next year may be a good one. His one desire in life seems to be not to be disturbed, to continue on the even tenure of his way without external interference. The busy strife, the eager competition, the unending nervous strain of modern civilisation, he regards with horror ; his very soul rises up in revolt against it. That this attitude of mind is fatal to him cannot be denied ; civilisation and progress are the forces of the world, and he who sets himself up against them is but beating against the solid rock. The Free State Boer must either learn or depart. At present he is out of touch with the times, and is therefore doubtless doomed either to extinction or absorption. But anachronism though he be, he has his good points ; and some of us who were his unwilling guests in camp and on the march, will carry through life a not unkindly memory of his rugged personality.

## CORIOLANUS ON THE STAGE.

(KEMBLE, KEAN, MACREADY.)

It will be seen, from its title, that no attempt has been made in this paper to examine the recent revival of *CORIOLANUS* at the Lyceum. The date of its production would not indeed have allowed me the time to do so properly, had I wished it. I have merely reviewed the contemporary estimate of the three celebrated actors who in their days revived the play, of whom two at least won great distinction in their presentment of the principal figure. It may, I have thought, be found interesting to compare these memories with the latest conception of the character of Caius Marcius.

There is no record of *CORIOLANUS* having been acted during Shakespeare's life-time. It was first published in the Folio of 1623, and is believed to have been written somewhere about 1608-10. We may reasonably assume therefore that it was acted, and that Elizabethan playgoers were gratified by the spectacle of a Caius Marcius in trunk hose and a boy-Volumnia in ruff and farthingale. But of this, as I say, there is no record. Since the Restoration at any rate Edmund Kean, in 1820, was the first to present Shakespeare's text of this play; for even John Kemble, the most famous representative of *Coriolanus* there has been, won his fame in a botched version, the last of several which have graced, or disgraced, the stage. The earliest of these saw the light, as represented by the theatre-candles, in 1682, and was the work of Nahum Tate who is

remembered for his mangling of *KING LEAR*, from which he removed the part of the Fool, possibly, as was suggested, because he wished to have no other fool but himself connected with the tragedy. The next adapter was John Dennis, whose memory lives rather by the reflected immortality he has won from his quarrel with Pope than by his own unaided genius; but both *THE INGRATITUDE OF A COMMON-WEALTH*, and *THE INVADER OF HIS COUNTRY*, as these alterations of *CORIOLANUS* were called, were quickly swept into that limbo which has but recently received its full complement by the accession of Cibber's *RICHARD THE THIRD*. James Thomson's *CORIOLANUS*, however, which was produced at Covent Garden in 1749, was not another of these improvements on Shakespeare, but an independent tragedy on the same theme; it has its importance in connection with this subject in that it furnished some of the ingredients for the stage *CORIOLANUS* of the next seventy years. The perpetrators of this arrangement did not hesitate to thrust Thomson into a closer rivalry with his predecessor than he had contemplated. And the version in which Thomas Sheridan, and afterwards John Kemble, appeared was the outcome of the combined talents of the poet of the seasons and the poet of all time. The latter, it must be said, gets very much the best of the bargain, for the contributions taken from Thomson are confined to some passages in the last two acts. Curiously enough the effect

of the alterations is to depreciate the parts of *Coriolanus* and *Volumnia*. Perhaps the play, as it stood, was thought too uncouth and irregular in the mountainous pre-eminence of its leading characters, and the increased importance given to the *Volscean* leaders by the introduction of passages from Thomson tended to make it more symmetrical and, according to the ideas of the eighteenth century, more artistic.

If this be so, the effect of these alterations in the character of the play corresponds to Kemble's treatment of the leading part. In the hero of this hybrid drama he found an opportunity for the exercise of his graceful declamatory talent, which, though it could present a regular and classic grandeur, was unequal to the representation of anything rugged or uncouth. This talent was the outcome of his physical qualities and the peculiar cast of his artistic temperament. The former made him slow and deliberate; the latter was precise and somewhat affected, with a leaning towards the heroic. Consequently his style was statuesque to the verge of stiffness, and even beyond it. He was always stately and dignified, or, as his detractors said, affected and supercilious. Greater value attaches to the criticisms of two fellow-artists, both of whom may be presumed to have judged him fairly. Macready writes in his *Memoirs*: "His noble form and stately bearing attracted and fixed observation, and his studious correctness retained attention; but in the torrent and tempest of passion he had not the sustained power of Talma or Kean." Mrs. Siddons said: "My brother John in his most impetuous bursts is always careful to avoid any discomposure of dress or deportment, but in the whirlwind of passion I lose all thought of such matters."

Such were the means by which

Kemble obtained his effects. It was not so much the Caius Marcius of the Republican city in the fifth century before our era that he suggested, as the incarnation of all the qualities of Imperial Rome, at any rate as they were understood in the eighteenth century. Here was an ideal outlet for his genius. A Roman hero, he might argue, would naturally be statuesque and declamatory, and averse to that torrent and tempest of passion of which Macready speaks. In expressing a loftiness of soul, a haughty contempt, a kind of arrogant stoicism and public spirit he was unrivalled, and his *Coriolanus* afforded scope for all these qualities. "The Roman characters," says Sir Walter Scott, "were indeed peculiarly suited to his noble and classical form, his dignified and stately gesture, his regulated yet commanding eloquence;" and again, in a private letter, he wrote of Kemble: "You know what a complete model he is of the Roman." Perhaps the criticism was juster than Sir Walter intended. The actor was indeed a complete model of the qualities traditionally ascribed to the ideal Roman ("an abstraction of Roman-nosed grandeur," to quote another and less complimentary critic), rather than the representative of a particular individual. The picture is completed by a touch of ridicule from Hazlitt whose democratic sympathies impelled him to make fun of the representative of the haughty patrician, whose "supercilious airs and nonchalance," he says, "remind one of the unaccountable abstracted air, the contracted eyebrows and suspended chin of a man who is just going to sneeze."

How far the conception thus suggested realises or departs from Shakespeare's intention is a question which will arise in connection with the performance of Macready; but in hardly any other Shakespearean



character, except Brutus, could Kemble have found a part so easily to be moulded to his own personality and art. It was because Coriolanus could be made oratorical and majestic without obvious violence to the author's design that Kemble's Coriolanus was so popular. It is probable also that weariness of the stately monotony of Kemble's manner was a prominent factor in the enthusiasm which welcomed to the London stage the natural vigour of Edmund Kean. His talents and his fiery force would quickly have brought him to the front in any case; but his triumph was heightened by the contrast which his style provided to that of the recognised king of the stage. Coriolanus was one of the few characters in which the latter had nothing to fear from his great rival. In fact Kean did not attempt the part until 1820, three years after Kemble's retirement. Even then his rendering was not liked. It was too rapid and vehement in manner to please a generation which, in this character at any rate, still looked for its standard of excellence to the deliberate majesty of Kemble. "Mr. Kean's acting is not of the patrician order," says Hazlitt, summing up the general opinion, and he adds an interesting remark on the subject of the mounting of the play: "One would think there were processions and ova-tions enough in this play as it was acted in John Kemble's time, but besides this there were introduced others of the same sort . . . and there was a sham fight of melo-dramatic effect in the second act in which Mr. Kean had like to have lost his voice."

But the real revolution in the fortunes of CORIOLANUS was brought about by Macready, in the mounting of the play no less than in the acting. In the former respect, as

has been aptly said, Macready reversed the achievement of Augustus, for he found the stage-Rome of marble and left it of brick. Kemble's ideal Roman had stalked about an ideal Rome. His declamations had resounded through the forum of a city made up of buildings of every style and period, which had hardly any feature in common save that none of them existed at the time of the Volscian wars. Macready's aim, on the other hand, was to substitute for the Rome of the popular imagination with its columns and arches, an impressive picture of the rude homely city as it was in the early days of the Republic, which should be in harmony with the tone of the play as he interpreted it. His friend John Forster, writing in *THE EXAMINER* for March, 1838, has left a vivid description of how he succeeded in this object. Of the triumphal entry into the city he says:

Every attempt at a stage "triumph" we happen to have seen before, compared with this, was as the gilt gingerbread of a Lord Mayor's show—the gorgeous tinsel of an ill-imitated grandeur. *This* was the grandeur itself, the rudeness and simplicity, the glory and truth of life. The next scene was that of the assembled senate of Rome, and perhaps in simple and majestic beauty this scene surpassed every other. The senators, in number between one and two hundred, occupy three sides of the stage in triple rows of benches—all in their white robes; with every point of the dress, no less than of the grave and solemn bearing, that distinguished the Roman senator, duly and minutely rendered. . . . We defy anyone, scholar or not, to look at this scene without emotion. It is not simply the image of power, but a reflection of the great heart of Rome.

It may be mentioned as an instance of Macready's minute and painstaking ingenuity, that in order to produce the effect of perspective

in this scene the senators farthest from the spectators were represented by boys.

Here is another of Forster's reproductions of Macready's stage-pictures :

When the curtain withdrew upon the first scene of the fourth act on Monday night, it disclosed a view of the city of Antium, by starlight—a truly grand and imaginative, yet real scene—and in the middle of the stage Macready stood alone, the muffled, disguised, banished Coriolanus. This realised Shakespeare and Plutarch. Behind him were the moles running out into the sea, and at the back of the scene the horizon drawn beyond the sea in one long level line, interrupted only by a tall solitary tower, the pharos, or watch-tower of Antium. The strict truth, and lofty moral effect, of this scene are surpassingly beautiful. . . . The pathetic effect is suddenly and startlingly increased by the intrusion of music on the air, as the door of Aufidius's house, where the General feasts his nobles, opens on the left of the stage.

All this, fine as it may have been in itself, was still more valuable as illustrating the altered conception of the play and its chief character which it was Macready's intention to present. The first step towards revealing what he contended to be Shakespeare's true meaning was to put before the audience as nearly as possible what Shakespeare really wrote. It is true that Kean had already done away with the Thomsonian interpolations; but the restoration of Shakespeare's text by Macready was part of a consistent policy which we recognise also in his banishment of Dryden's alterations from *THE TEMPEST*, and in the return of the Fool to *KING LEAR*.

His conception of Shakespeare's meaning in the present play was that Caius Marcius is a rough passionate soldier, a rugged patriot and hero of the period when the stern republican virtues had not yet begun to be superseded by the luxurious civilisation of the rulers of the world, a proud and

fierce patrician of the early days of the struggle between the orders. "A man of rough manners, but of fiery and passionate sincerity," says Forster in the article already cited; and he triumphantly quotes North's translation of Plutarch's *LIVES*, from which Shakespeare drew, to prove that this interpretation realised the poet's meaning: "So choleric and impatient, that he would yield to no living creature: which made him churlish, uncivil, and altogether unfit for any man's conversation."

Forster's intention of exalting Macready's performance by direct contrast with that of Kemble is plainly shown by a sentence already referred to, "It is the silliest of mistakes to suppose that Coriolanus is an abstraction of Roman-nosed grandeur," which brought down on Macready the retort from James Smith :

What scenes of grandeur does this play disclose,  
Where all is Roman, save the Roman's nose!

Each critic hits off very happily the weakness of the player whom he attacks. That of Kemble has already been considered. In Macready's case the drawback was the excessive naturalness, as it was called, which made his rendering appear petty and unheroic. This was as much the outcome of his artistic manner and methods as Kemble's grandeur was of his. Macready was an extremely painstaking actor, and the excessive care and minuteness of attention which he bestowed on the preparation of his parts, owing to his anxiety to appear natural, tended to make the finished article seem laborious and affected. It is this that gives point to the sneer at his Macbeth, that it represented "a respectable Scottish gentleman in considerable difficulties." He lacked, it was said, the art to

conceal art, and so the general conception of a character was apt to be thrust out of sight by the evidences of elaborate study and conscientious preparation which kept rising to the surface.

How minute and conscientious this preparation was we get some idea from the glimpses given us by his Memoirs of the time when he was first studying the part of Coriolanus. He fears that the public recollection of Kemble in the part will be too strong for him, and he goes on, thus :

But with a full consciousness of the difficulty of my task I went to work. To add grace and dignity to my deportment I studied under D'Egville the various attitudes from the antique, and practised the more stately walk which was enforced by the peculiarity of their dress on the *gens togata*. I allowed myself no leisure, intent on mastering the patrician's outward bearing, and under that giving full vent to the unbridled passion of the man.

The last sentence gives the key to his construction of the character. He was to bring out the human nature that there is in it, the particular passionate nature of the man Caius Marcius, and not merely the rough stern nature of the early Roman. Nineteen years later, when he produced the play under his own management, we still find the same careful preparation in such entries in his diary as this, "Brought home my helmet to accustom myself to it." The image of Macready sitting down to breakfast or to his correspondence in a Roman helmet may provoke a smile, but there can be nothing but admiration for the artist who, in face of the Kemble tradition, had the boldness to conceive a new and striking

view of the character, and the power and skill to carry it out. For the unvarying loftiness upon which Kemble so largely relied he substituted, in the words of one critic, "variety, flexibility, and power." Each interpretation may have supplied something of the character which the other missed. In an essay by Lewes, entitled *WAS MACREADY A GREAT ACTOR?*, there is a passage which throws considerable light on his Coriolanus, with regard both to its limitations and to the qualities which he was most successful in expressing.

Every actor is by nature fitted for certain characters and unfitted for others. I believe Macready to be radically unfitted for ideal characters—for the display of broad elemental passions,—for the representation of grandeur moral or physical ; and I believe him peculiarly fitted for the irritable, the tender, and the domestic ; he can depict rage better than passion, anguish better than mental agony, misery better than despair, tenderness better than the abandonment of love. But the things he can do he does surpassingly well ; and for this, also, I must call him a great actor.

Thus impelled and guided by the scope and limitations of his talent Macready enriched the theatre with a Coriolanus, which, while it did not attain to the heroic stature of Kemble's, nevertheless made up for this deficiency by means of a genuine and passionate humanity. It is clear from the text of the play itself that this was a side of the character which Shakespeare had in his mind ; and it is for his success in restoring this side of it to the stage that Macready chiefly deserves to be remembered in connection with the play.

G. CROSSE.

## WHEN THE CHOLERA CAME TO SANTA CRUZ.

ONE hot night, when every air was still, four men of Anglo-Saxon race were seated in a room overlooking the quaint old Spanish city of Santa Cruz in Tenerife. Beneath them the moon-lit roadstead heaved in long pulsations, a sheet of deepest indigo smooth as polished glass and streaked with glittering silver on the oily backs of the swell. To the north the volcanic mountain-range rolled down in a giant wall of vitrified crags relieved by splintered pinnacles to the fringe of creamy foam; and on the other hand white walls, carved balconies, and the red-tiled roofs of churches lay bathed in mellow light. Through the open windows there drifted the eternal song of the surf, and a curious musky odour which hung above the town.

It was comparatively cool in that upper room (the terminus of a submarine cable) and dark, save that a little lantern, by an arrangement of lenses, cast a sharp-edged line of radiance upon a mirror, which Hayward the electrician watched attentively. "For a week since the steamer sailed to fish the broken end," he said, "we have stared at that streak turn about by night and day. My brain seems filled with lines of light, but I can't help feeling it will speak to us presently."

For a time the rest smoked on in silence, listening to the growl of the surf. Three were men of science who had worked hard all day, and to whom, tired of the noisy *cafés* and idle political rumours in the hot streets below, this was a snug retreat. Suddenly the radiance flickered spasmodically; Hayward touched an in-

strument and a sharp metallic clicking broke the stillness of the room. "It's the Galileo talking now," he said, "They will finish the splice to-morrow. and there are many people who will thank God for that very soon. Before many weeks are over a slender strand of copper will be all that connects this island with the rest of the world, for they can't well quarantine that."

"I don't catch on," said the skipper of a leaky American barque, which had anchored there badly damaged.

"I am afraid you will by and by," answered Hayward. "I am speaking very seriously,—the punishment of wicked dirtiness is death. They have had their warnings during the last few years, and, as usual, did nothing. Now, when the trade-breeze veering northward is shut out by the *cordillera*, and it is hotter than anyone remembers before, while water is bad and scanty, the cholera is going to clean out their town. A few are dying already though they try to hush it up. What has brought the flies in legions, blackening every wall?"

"You are right about the flies, any way," said the skipper meditatively. "They know that sign down south."

Hayward went on: "Have you nearly finished the conduit, Tyrrell, or can you close the work and clear? It is surely coming, and this place will be a shambles in a few weeks more."

"It will take at least another fortnight," answered the big contractor. "No; I can't go until I've completed my bargain and have the papers

signed for pay; otherwise, I would do so gladly for the sake of the wife at home. Besides, we took a pride in our section, and I intend to see it through. Harry, I will let you off, if you like; your work is almost done."

Harry Gilroy was his clerk and draughtsman, a man of varied experience if still young in years, who answered languidly: "I have seen Yellow Jack busy in Brazilian harbour work, and you won't find anything very much worse than that. I mean to stay here with you; there's no use bolting before the trouble comes."

Then there followed another interval of silence, and an indefinite something weighed upon the hearts of all in that room, until, as they rose to go, the Electrician said: "It was only right to warn you, and I can't help feeling anxious when I think of what is to come, while I am sincerely thankful I sent Mrs. Hayward home."

During the three succeeding weeks Contractor Tyrrell and his clerk Gilroy worked even harder than before, high up among the chaos of fire-rent crags walling in the deep valley, where they were employed upon one of the several water-schemes which, carried on in the leisurely Spanish fashion, were some time in the dim future to benefit Santa Cruz. Under the burning heat of noon, amid lava dust and *scoria*, and by the glare of the roaring lucigen at night, they drove the slothful Latin *peons* as they had never been driven before, till the British-built section of the water-course lengthened rapidly, while in the sweltering town below each citizen's face grew anxious, and men whispered together at the corners of the streets. Then, one memorable morning, Gilroy dropped his rule, and a score of labourers broke away in fear, for far down beneath him a tiny

yellow flag ran up and hung limply from the staff of the citadel. It was only two square yards of bunting, but it would close that roadstead more effectively than a fleet of ironclads, warning each ship-captain that death was hard at work, and that every port would be barred to him if he cast his anchor there. Later in the day a clash of jangling bells rose up from the Spanish town, and the listeners' lips set tighter, for they knew that before every altar where the smoke of incense went up trembling priests prayed too late for deliverance from the sure and just reward of their rulers' slothfulness. "The man with the cleanest body, and the least upon his mind, will come out best just now," said Tyrrell quietly. "Well, we'll finish our contract if we can control the labourers, and afterwards trust in Providence to evade the cordon."

The weeks that followed will never be forgotten in Santa Cruz, and stories of what happened there will long be told throughout the islands of the Canary archipelago. All day the unclean city lay in sweltering heat, for the trade-wind had veered a few points and the steep mountains shut out every puff of breeze. Candles burned in the shadowy churches and fires in the sun-scorched squares; masses were chanted hour by hour, but red crosses increased on the doorways, and the plague worked its will unchecked. All night blinking torches filed through the silent streets, for a Spanish funeral is generally held in the dark, and there are various reasons, including the free use of quick-lime, why it is better so. Many died from mere terror: the cemeteries overflowed; and lime-charred objects, which had been covered but a few short weeks with soil from Palestine, were flung out

upon the ghastly heap beyond each inner wall.

Every morning and evening three Englishmen bathed in the surf, and one went back a little refreshed to watch over the talking wires which were very busy then, flashing messages that broke up many a family or brought hope to anxious hearts through the depths of the sea. The other two still toiled on at the water-course, bonding stone and smearing cement with their own blistered hands, for most of the *peons*, true to their Latin nature, slunk away in semi-superstitious terror to lie in despairing apathy waiting for the pestilence in their unclean homes. But the Contractor and his assistant, with the slow persistence of a stubborn race, held on unheeding, offering treble wages to any who would help.

At last the final stone was fitted, and that night the three met again in the cable-office above the stricken town. "My part is done," said Tyrrell. "If the Spaniards had finished theirs there would at least have been clean water in Santa Cruz. However, with luck they may complete it before the next cholera. Now, for the sake of those at home, I'll run no purposeless risks, so Gilroy and I intend to get out of this island somehow, in spite of their Government. If we can't do better, we'll row over to Grand Canary in a fishing-skiff."

The Electrician was haggard and anxious, for during eighteen hours each day, in a time when assistance was scarce, it was his hands which held the links binding that island to Cuba, England, and Spain; but he smiled as he answered: "You would only be swamped by the trade-wind sea before you got half way. We had better try Maccario who runs the potato-boat. I paid him well for lifting the shore-end of the cable

once or twice, and he might take a bribe from me. Still, very few have passed the cordon, and most of them dare not try. By the way, Skipper Marvin has not been here for a week, and they have the sickness on board. In days like these it might be only Christian to look him up, and we can arrange about Maccario on the way."

Half an hour later their gig slid into the shadow of the leaky American barque which lay rolling drowsily athwart the lift of the swell. Her black side rose above them streaked with phosphorescent spangles where the oily sea sucked down, a gurgling rush of water poured from her scuppers, and the clang and clash of ceaseless pumps rang through the stillness. Gaining the moonlit deck they saw a group of men stripped to the waist sway forward and straighten their weary backs again as the big wheels went round. The mate came forward to greet them. "The skipper's been expecting you," he said in a shaking voice; "he can't last very long. There's five of them down in the forecabin; the carpenters brought it aboard. She's leaking like a basket with half the butts opened, and would go down underneath us in the trade-breeze roll or I would clear to sea."

Entering the poop-cabin, which was insufferably hot and foul, they found a man, whose face haunted them long afterwards, lying rolled in blankets upon a locker. "I guessed you would come to see the last of me," he said half aloud. "I'm going in an hour or two; you needn't shake your head like that,—touch my hand and see. I know your kind too well to ask if you're not afraid."

"No, we are none of us afraid," answered Tyrrell simply, though he felt the chill of death strike through him as he grasped the icy hand.



The other continued in broken sentences: "I'm going to ask a last favour, for we're the same kin after all. It don't count very much, any way, but I've lived on the sea for forty years, and now it don't seem quite fitting to be shot with a cart-load of yellow Dagoes into that bubbling lime ashore. No, and it's all I ask you,—there's clean blue water outside. The mate will take a fathom of the old stud-link chain, and Tyrrell will read your British service; there's a bit of one on board. We don't use that to home, you know, but there's a tone about it, and it's in our common tongue, so I guess it suits this case better than—what they do ashore." Tyrrell pressed the cold, damp fingers reassuringly, as the thin voice went on: "I've done my best for the owners, dealing on the square, and now when the last charter's cancelled, I'll go out as is fitting for the captain of a ship."

That was the last he said clearly, and the Contractor, who could scarcely breathe down there, went up on deck, where now and then a murmur reached him through the skylights, until somebody tapped on a beam, and re-entering he knew by the silence that the end had come. "Gone," said the mate when they saw him. "He was sometimes a bit of a driver, but a white man all through; and now we had better do as he asked before those Dagoes come."

It was done, and Tyrrell long remembered the dry crackle of the new canvas and the pluck of sewing twine as the sail-maker did his work. Then he sat bare-headed in the stern of the gig, reading hurriedly, while the rest kept watch for the Commandancia launch, until the men ceased rowing, and the oar-blades swung up vertically in the air. "It's brand new," said the mate, who was busy with some marine, "but he was always great

on doing things in style, so we'll let him keep the banner too;" and a sprinkling of stars on an azure field caught Tyrrell's eye as a grey roll of canvas slid across the gunwale and splashed into the sea. Then the boat was rowed shoreward, and presently Hayward held parley with Maccario, who owned a little half-decked craft used for carrying a ton or two of potatoes from the villages down the coast. The latter plainly pointed out that what they proposed would be a risky business, for an edict had been published forbidding those in Santa Cruz landing on any island of the archipelago under heavy penalties. Therefore, said he, they must pay the value of the craft before they sailed, in case of confiscation, and as much again if landed in Grand Canary, where they would probably have to sink the boat and crawl ashore up some lonely ravine, lest the terrified villagers should murder them. Also, he added significantly, the moon was near the mountain-tops, and if they decided to run the risk it would be wise to start at once. "It's a costly business," said Tyrrell; "but we can't stay here indefinitely, and the attempt will have to be made. Let him count this silver, and we are ready to go."

The boatman counted the dollars, and, promising to return in a little time, departed towards the town, probably to bury them, for there is little financial security in the possessions of Spain. The bank endorsed by the Government maintains its right to meet its obligations with ten per cent. of copper coin, and the rest in silver only, while in the Canaries at least a draft is received with scanty confidence, and even the wealthier merchants prefer to convert their unused capital into golden *onzas* coined several hundred years ago, which used to come from Cuba, and are about the

only bullion generally obtainable. The writer has seen iron caskets full of them, and their owner smiled cunningly when a bank or an investment was suggested, knowing well, from experience, that they were safer in the chest. Commerce among the islands is thus carried on by the exchange of goods in kind, or the shipment of sealed bags of silver, and any form of cheque is almost unknown.

Meantime, the Englishmen lay down on the shingle under the gloomy entrance of the Bufadero ravine, where Nelson's picked blue-jackets were driven back into the surf. Near at hand the smooth heave of the Atlantic raising itself on end fell crashing athwart a head of fused cinders, and swirled in creamy smother up a slope of coal-black sand almost to their feet. Behind, the black wall of Las Cañadas rose in a clean-cut ebony ridge against the dark blue sky, and higher still the giant Peak lifted a shrouded cone of snow into the moonlight. There were orange-trees and date-palms near the mouth of the valley, but each leaf and frond hung very still, and their heavy fragrance mingled with the saltiness of the spray. For a space Tyrrell kept silence, gnawing nervously at his pipe or flinging a piece of shingle into the sea, while the boom of the surf spoke to him, as it were audibly, calling him forth to further work, to health and home again. Before him the wide Atlantic stretched away to the north, and behind from the stricken city there rose a roll of drums and a jangle of discordant bells which seemed never still, doubtless to mark the funeral of another officer. At last he said: "I hope Maccario does not intend to play us a trick, he has been half an hour at least, and I feel intensely anxious to get away. Three months of inaction in this awful place

would drive me mad, I think. Still, I found them honest; several ragged *peons*, before they bolted, voluntarily refunded me a few dollars paid in advance. I suppose, Hayward, you won't come along with us?"

The Electrician sighed as he answered. "I have the wires to watch; there is no one else could keep things straight in a time like this, and I am in charge, you know. However, to change the subject, the rank and file of this people are honest enough, frugal and industrious, too, but, unstable and impulsive, they fall easy victims to unscrupulous officers. Well, many of the latter are paying for it now. Nearly all that is good in Cuba is the work of the emigrant Canario, and with a strong hand to rule them there is little they could not do. So some of them dream of republics where every one can have a say, which would mean worse chaos still. What fools we all of us are!"

Presently footsteps were heard on the high road. "Here comes Maccario," said Hayward. "If you will give me fifteen dollars, to keep straight with the Company, I will send your wife a message that you are on the way, and remember you call on Mrs. Hayward if you ever get through." The friends grasped hands for the last time with the froth of the broken rollers hissing at their feet, and a faint, "Good luck!" followed the adventurers through the boom of the surf as, after launching a boat under the shelter of the head, Maccario rowed them towards a cluster of small craft. Both the Englishmen were used to the ways of the sea, so when they reached the little, wherry-rigged *goleta*,<sup>1</sup> Gilroy said: "See every thing clear for hoisting, but we'll row her off with no canvas set to the edge of

<sup>1</sup>A small two-masted craft used in the coasting-trade.

the breeze. We should begin to feel it about a mile away. Ah, there goes the moon at last,"—and as the bright disc sank behind the mountains the world grew suddenly dark.

Here it may be explained that for eight months every year the rush of the North-East Trades sweeps above a waste of foam-flecked rollers past the Canary Isles, which have been heaved aloft by volcanic fire out of twelve thousand feet of sea to, as it happens, an equal height in the air. But so lofty are the splintered ranges, Cañada and Cumbre, that under the lee of each island there is scarcely a moving air, and beneath every terminal promontory a straight-drawn line of whiteness divides the frothing combers from the smooth-backed swell.

"Lie still for your lives!" whispered Gilroy, just as they had loosed the moorings; and a dim shadow flitted swiftly along the shore, while the sharp whirr of an electric motor broke through the monotone of the sea. A minute or two later the approaching vessel drove under the stern of an anchored gunboat, and when a hail came down from her poop a clear voice replied, "*Guardia de Comandancia, Reina Mercedes.*" The watchers held their breath as the launch drew near the tier of boats, but she passed on close beside them, and the click of her engines grew fainter as she vanished into the night. "We know the password, at all events," said Gilroy with a gasp of relief. "Now we can slip past the gunboat for the shelter of the American barque. We may also thank our stars she has not steam up." Two balanced sweeps dipped noiselessly, and Gilroy sculled astern, until, as the shadowy bulk of the cruiser loomed up near at hand, he said in Castilian: "Stop pulling, Maccario, and let me answer. I hope most devoutly that sentry has not keen eyes,—still, it is very dark."

Again a drowsy challenge came down from the lofty poop, and Gilroy, who dared not trust the fisherman's patois, and trembled lest he also should fail in the roll of the r's answered hoarsely, "*Guardias civiles,—Reina Mercedes.*" Somebody growled what seemed an approving "*Adelante vigilancia,*" high above his head, and leaving the set of the current to carry them, they drifted on, a moving streak of blackness unseen a few yards away, until a hurried dip of the sweep drove the *goleta* under the counter of the American ship. Here they waited, invisible altogether, until again the launch passed by, and then Tyrrell said, "There's only the Guard-boat's gig; we must get out before she comes." Then the sweeps splashed fast together, and straining every muscle they drove the heavy craft across the lift of the swell, while the sweat ran down into their eyes, and their breath came short in gasps. There was not a zephyr to line the glassy heave, while now, but half a mile away, the Trade-breeze roared down from the northwards, and the Atlantic rollers shook their white crests aloft.

"We will do it yet," panted Tyrrell, slackening his grip on the sweep. "Don't cry out too soon," answered Gilroy; "we haven't seen the *civiles*, and I think I hear oars now." He was right, for presently, out of the denser darkness in the mountain's shadow, there came a pulsating sound, lost one moment in a growl of surf, and rising sharp and clear the next. This was not the quick beat and gurgle of a British stroke, but the intermittent rattle of long Spanish oars which swing in a becket of hide; and the men who heard it rowed harder than before. The phosphorescent water, sparkling green and gold in the eddying wake, flamed about the sweeps: the balanced looms

groaned harshly as they turned on the centre pin; but the *goleta* had not been built to row, and the lighter gig astern came up very fast. "We'll keep on until they shoot us, or run this craft aboard," gasped Tyrrell; but Gilroy had no breath to answer as he wrenched on the sculling oar. He could hear an officer encouraging the men behind, the rattling thud of bending oars, and the swash of water under plunging bows; but the sound of the Trade-wind sea also grew louder, and he knew if they could reach it in time no gig could catch the *goleta* under sail. Desperately he toiled on until a breath of cool air touched his dripping face, when, flinging down the sculling oar, he sprang forward in frantic haste to run the foresail up. "Keep on at the sweep, Maccario; we have found the first of the breeze," he panted out, as the jib fluttered aloft. The dew-drenched canvas rattled, and then slowly hardened out; the tinkle of luminous water grew sharper under the bows each time the *goleta* was lifted on the back of a swell, while the deck sloped a little, and the wake flashed brighter until the play of flickering fire stretched back towards the following boat. "In sweeps, up with the main-sail!" he cried as his breath came again, and three pairs of very willing hands tore the halliards through the blocks. The boom swung out across the stern, the peak shook down a shower of dew upon the men below, and the angle of the deck grew steeper yet. A heavier swell than usual leaped up in vivid blue and green about the lee gunwale; the masts creaked with a sudden pressure, and the shrouds began to hum, while a Spanish voice howled confused threats and orders in the gloom behind.

"Handy with sheet and tiller; here's the edge of the true beeeze!"

cried Tyrrell, and Maccario unhitched a tackle as Gilroy put up his helm. Over went the *goleta* until the brine washed high along her deck, then plunging through a rush of foam drove ahead like a steamer, while a huge comber roared frothing down to lee. "At last!" said Tyrrell hoarsely. "She would drown them in ten minutes if they follow us here," as in peril of his life he sprang up on the narrow deck, and with childish exultation hurled Castilian maledictions at the men behind, until his companion said: "When you have finished that fooling perhaps you'll come down again before she flings you overboard. It would not help matters very much for the *guardias* to pick you up."

The pursuers, however, had evidently had enough of the chase, and seemed even then in difficulties, judging by the shouted orders and the last glimpse the fugitives caught of their gig as she twisted, half-buried in froth and spray, on the crest of a sea. Doubtless they went back again, for they were seen no more, and Gilroy gave up the tiller saying: "Take charge now, Maccario, and remember no canvas comes off her for another hour." For a while the *goleta* foamed ahead, buried to the second deck-plank by the press of sail, while a whirling mass of brine and spray broke solidly across her each time she climbed up from the trough and plunged into the white chaos of a comber's ridge.

"I have sailed for silver cups, but never a race like this," said Gilroy at length. "I think we are safe from any pursuit, so now we'll try to reef her before we fill her up;" and under reduced canvas the *goleta* swept in comparative dryness across the Trade-wind sea while, kneeling in the water, he plied a bucket fast. When the sun swung

up above the rim of the ocean the purple heights of Grand Canary rose streaked with fleecy mist out of a white-flecked sea, and Maccario, recognising the Peak of Galdar and the great ravine of Agaete out of which the vapours rose like the smoke of a burning town, with true Spanish diplomacy put the tiller up, and the *goleta* headed south as though she had come down along the coast. The reason was soon apparent; as they ran into smoother water under Aldea Head a latine-rigged fishing-craft stood out across her bows, and in answer to the questions of her red-capped crew Maccario calmly answered, "*Buscando chicharro*," which in the Islander's patois means, "Looking for mackerel." This seemed sufficient for the fishermen, who no doubt took them for drift-netters from Las Palmas, and called out hoarse directions as the *goleta* swept on south.

The sun was high when at last he landed them in the sheltered mouth of a gloomy chasm filled with ash and *scoriae* about which the volcanic crags fell down two thousand feet to the sea. Then Tyrrell counted out the rest of the silver, and bade the fisherman good-bye, after which the latter worthy, advising them to avoid the first few villages, stood out alone towards Gomera Isle, and what tale he told its inhabitants the

Englishmen never knew. They dried their brine-soaked garments in the scorching sun, after which for weary hours they dragged themselves over broken lava and cinder wastes sprinkled with euphorbia towards the black peaks above, till towards the afternoon they reached a village nestling among orange groves, palms, and vineyards in a watered gorge. Here their ignorance of Spanish, which was more apparent than real, led the hill-peasants to set them down as some of the foolish Englishmen who clambered across Los Pexos to pick up bits of cinders or fill cases with specimens of mountain vegetation which were not good to eat. Thus, when Gilroy, showing a few silver dollars, said something about a mule and Las Palmas, two sure-footed beasts and a guide were soon forthcoming; and by the time the first rays of the moon touched the mountains they rode into that modernised city where lime-kilns and coal-heaps have replaced the ancient palms.

Ten days later an anxious man with a haggard face smiled in Santa Cruz as the tireless cable delivered him this message out of the depths of the sea: "Got through quite safe,—Mrs. Hayward well—joins us wishing best health to you."

HAROLD BINDLOSS.

## THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

### ITS METHODS AND ITS TEMPTATIONS.

It has often been said that the chief characteristic of the House of Commons, and one of the surest sources of its strength, is the instinct with which it reflects in a remarkably high degree the feelings and political wishes of the country. There are those among its greatest admirers who believe that if it once ceased to do this its influence would begin to wane, but that its skill in adapting itself to varying circumstances and changing requirements has ever been, and will continue to be, sufficient to enable it to avoid so momentous a risk.

There is much force in these contentions; but nevertheless it behoves those who wield authority in the House, to consider from time to time whether its methods and habits are really in accordance with the wishes of the constituencies, and whether it is maintaining unimpaired that intense respect and regard which have raised it to the highest position among the representative assemblies of the world, and have enabled it to work out such benefits to the commonwealth as are beyond estimate and defy exaggeration. There are not a few reasons for suspecting that an occasion for doing so exists at present. Some time has elapsed since one of the leaders of the House of Commons commented somewhat caustically on the "dreary drip of dilatory declamation;" but more recently another leader expressed a dread lest "the Mother of Parliaments should become garrulous in her old age." The tendency of debates to

become unduly prolonged has been the subject both of satire and of regret, and there is a growing feeling that the flow of words, which is poured forth day after day, is out of all proportion to the action which those words are presumed to explain and to determine.

The tendency is increased by the presence in the House of a considerable number of individuals, possessing rhetorical powers of no mean order, who avowedly are not greatly concerned with keeping up the credit or the influence of the Assembly of which they are members, and who employ their eloquence not so much with a view to the solution of difficult problems as with a view to hindering the performance of legislative work. The efforts of these gentlemen certainly are not checked, and probably are encouraged by the support of many others who, still cherishing admiration for the Legislature and a desire to maintain its efficiency, are eager, for partisan reasons, to thwart the action of a majority out of which they too hastily say that no good thing can come. The consequence is a continued conflict between those who want to do and those who want to talk, of which there are many signs that the community is beginning to weary.

The weariness would have begun earlier, and possibly even ere now assumed another and less negligible form, had it not been that for many years the country has not been seriously anxious for heroic or drastic



legislation. Most of the great problems were settled before the nineteenth century entered its last quarter. The efforts of a series of able statesmen labouring for over forty years under two Sovereigns, one unable to resist the pressure of popular will, and the other wholly free from any desire to do so, provided only that the true meaning and effect of that pressure were really understood, had brought our constitution and our code to a pitch of perfection with which the electorate were so far content that they evinced, and felt, no serious wish for organic change. It is probably even true that for five and twenty years they have mistrusted and disliked anything beyond attempts to polish and ease the working of a satisfactory machine. Here and there advocates for this and that reform have tried to make their own particular whims burning questions; but they have failed to make them burn. Programmes have been from time to time put forward with more or less earnestness and some apparent zeal; but they have provoked no enthusiasm, and have either sunk quietly into oblivion, or have been changed beyond recognition by the shifting personal factors of the moment. In a word the country has for several decades been content that Parliament should do little, and has therefore acquiesced with a smile of amusement, if not of admiration, when the House of Commons has insisted on talking much. Having no great and unsolved problems of principle to interest it, the country has felt far more keenness about men than about measures. Just as the House of Commons fills rapidly when some delicate or difficult personal question comes before it for discussion, so the country has for many years passed with tolerant confidence from the discussions on the legislative proposals of successive Governments,

to read eagerly debates on matters of mere personal or local importance.

In so far as all this is a sign that the country is prosperous and contented, free from any internal irritation which an act of Parliament can allay, and interested only in the removal of some impediment to progress, it may be regarded as a satisfactory proof of national well-being. But nations, like individuals, may become slothful and luxurious under the influence of prolonged prosperity, and legislative chambers are not exempt from the same danger. The ease with which the House of Lords performs its functions, the small amount of time which it bestows on the business of the country, and the persistence with which on all but very exceptional occasions it adjourns for dinner, are regarded by the vast majority of critics with entire acquiescence. For there is a general feeling of confidence that if there should arise anything which really requires doing the House of Lords would set to work to do it. A few careful observers indeed may be unable to repress a dread lest prolonged inertia may produce atrophy, and atrophy decay; but the country as a whole has hitherto regarded with the same complacent smile the House of Lords doing little and talking less, and the House of Commons doing little and talking incessantly.

There are signs, however, that this complacency is beginning to yield to a fear lest the House of Commons is acquiring a habit of garrulity which may become incurable. At present the country desires to see carried out a careful reform of the army and such strengthening of the navy as may be necessary. What it would like would be that these tasks should be treated not as party-questions, but as the work of a united legislature. For the initiation of proposals the Govern-

nient of the day must in the nature of things be responsible; but what is desired at least, and what the country is justified in expecting, is that these proposals should be wisely criticised, improved by all the combined wisdom and capable statesmanship which can be brought to bear upon them, and carried out with a sole regard to the national welfare. What it does not desire is that upon every detail should be poured an unlimited flood of immature eloquence, in which discussion of principles is drowned in chatter about personalities, and which contributes nothing to a clear perception of the issues before the public, but much to a misunderstanding of matters of supreme consequence, whereon a wise decision is of the utmost value to the nation. There must be moments when public needs require the temporary abandonment of party methods. An Opposition wise enough and magnanimous enough to say, "We will not carp at the proposals for Imperial defence which are put before us, but in no hostile spirit do our best to improve them," would earn the admiration and gratitude of the constituencies to an extent which would be certain greatly to influence their electoral position in the future.

In the first period of the first session of the new Parliament there has certainly not been demonstrated any disposition on the part of the House of Commons to check the prolongation of debate. The new House seems to be even more fond of discussion than its immediate predecessors. Not only are public affairs talked over at great length,—especially when the slightest excuse can be found for bringing in some personal question—but a growing tendency has been displayed to postpone, for ever lengthening periods of the parliamentary day, even the inception of

public business. Until comparatively recent sessions discussions on private business in the House were rare. Only when matters of important principle were involved used the House itself to debate the second reading of a private bill. Having full confidence in its own committees it was content to leave with them the discussion and decision of all but matters of far-reaching consequence and great moment. It adopted this policy all the more readily in that private bills deal mostly with local matters to the determination of which carefully sifted local evidence is essential. The House watched and encouraged the elaboration of the machinery of the committee-rooms till it reached a pitch of high perfection, and rarely interfered either to guide or impede its operation. What control or supervision were necessary it was willing to entrust to the influence of the Chairman of Committees acting on highly skilled and thoroughly trained advice.

Latterly, however, the House of Commons has shown a disposition to abandon this attitude, and not only to debate at length the second readings of railway, gas, water, and other local bills, even when the area of their influence is limited, but also to deal with clauses by the somewhat novel or exceptional method of moving instructions. It is true indeed that such attempts to superinduce the functions of a committee upon the whole House have to some extent failed, because the form in which the instructions were moved has made them out of order. But much reliance cannot be placed upon this; and if the House does not sternly set its face against the discussion of private bills, that discussion is sure to grow more and more diffuse, and to seek to deal more and more with minute and immaterial detail.

As with private business so it is with questions. Time was when the questions asked of Ministers were few in number, confined to matters of great public interest and importance, and put, if not solely from the front Opposition bench, at least only by men of admittedly high position and influence. Now nothing is too trivial to form the subject of a question, nor is there the slightest hesitation or restraint in putting it. In 1820 the House met on April 21st, and between that date and May 26th Hansard records only four questions. In 1840 in the first month of the session thirty questions were asked. In 1860 in the first month, which included twenty-one working days, one hundred and eighty-four questions were asked, or an average of nearly nine a day. In 1880 the first month included twenty working days and two hundred and ninety-three questions were asked, an average of nearly fifteen a day. From February 15th to March 15th of the present session, a period which included seventeen working days, twelve hundred and ninety-seven questions were put on the notice-paper, an average of seventy-six a day. Some of these questions were probably not put or not answered; but on the other hand many supplemental questions, arising out of replies given, were put and were answered. On two occasions, February 28th and March 14th, no less than one hundred and twenty-two questions appeared on the notice-paper; on another there were one hundred and fifteen, and on a third ninety-three. Between March 11th and March 21st, a period which included six working days, one Scotch member, whose absence from the House during the early days of the session was an equal loss to the legislature and his constituency, asked forty-three questions.

Of all this mass of questions but a

small proportion could be satisfied by the statement of one fact, or the supply of one item of information. The great bulk of them have to do as a rule with many matters. They contain many paragraphs and refer to many incidents. They are frequently asked in an argumentative form and cannot well be dealt with save by elaborate replies, in which the avoidance of controversy is very difficult. The preparation of the answers by the Departments concerned involves not only a considerable consumption of the public time by highly-paid officials taken away from important administrative duties, but very heavy expenditure in telegraphing for particulars to all parts of the Empire. In a word the practice of the House of Commons in regard to questions leads to a vast expenditure both of the time and of the money of the State.

The attitude of the newspapers who have devoted attention to this practice is somewhat remarkable. Many of them appear to be aware that there is a dangerous development. *THE TIMES* itself, on March 1st, expressed the opinion that, "The multiplication of questions to Ministers is becoming so great a nuisance that it will probably bring about its own remedy." Nevertheless not only are the questions and answers recorded in very many instances after they have been asked and answered, but statements are published in regard to their purport before hand. "On Tuesday next the First Lord of the Treasury will be asked whether . . . and why." "Mr. So-and-So proposes to interrogate the Secretary of State for War with regard to . . ." "The Home Secretary will also be invited to state if . . ." "The case of . . . will be brought under the notice of the House by . . . who proposes to ask the President of the

Local Government Board whether . . . " This sort of thing appears continually,—not even *THE TIMES* being exempt from the temptation—and its effect must be to encourage an estimate of the importance of the information sought in the mind of the honourable member seeking it, which needs no encouragement and is already probably somewhat exaggerated.

Now what is it that the House of Commons desires, and what outcome does it expect from the multiplication of questions? Undoubtedly Parliament is entitled to demand and to receive all the information which is necessary to enable it to exercise its constitutional function of checking, controlling, and directing the action of the Executive Government in which for the time being it reposes confidence. And inasmuch as the greater part of this very valuable constitutional duty is performed by the House of Commons, that House is perfectly justified in insisting on being placed in possession of the necessary knowledge. But this object is not attained by the asking of an inordinate number of questions the interest of which to the House, and even to the questioner, is absolutely ephemeral. Of an overwhelming proportion of the questions asked during recent sessions it cannot be said that they have contributed one iota to the right exercise of that influence which the House ought to have on the Executive. They have added little real value to the knowledge of affairs possessed, and rightly desired, by the House or the country. Of most of them the effect has been completely forgotten two days,—it is scarcely an exaggeration to say two hours—after they have been asked. Yet it is impossible to say that the uselessness of any one of them was from the first so clear that it should

have been vetoed by some competent authority, or rejected by the Minister to whom it was addressed; for the theory is sound that there is no detail of administrative action so insignificant as to be utterly incapable of producing results of great Imperial importance. Equally sound, however, is the theory that the good sense of the House of Commons can be trusted to draw the line between matters which are likely to be of moment and matters which are extremely unlikely to have any real consequence. How in practice it has lately exercised this discretion is scarcely an easy question even for its greatest admirers to answer.

The remedy is not easy to find. Questions cannot be forbidden altogether, nor can they be limited to one day or one part of a day; the reason being that at any moment some event of real and not imaginary importance may occur with regard to which the House of Commons is justified in asking for, and ought to be able to obtain, immediate information. A recent instance of such an occurrence, which by some mishap was communicated to one House of Parliament and not to the other, contributed not indirectly to the expenditure of some hours in the discussion of a motion for adjournment. Nor can questions be limited in number, and the machinery of the ballot introduced as in the case of private members' bills. In bills that machinery is applied at the beginning of the session once for all. This could not be the case as regards questions, so long as they can be asked at any afternoon sitting of the House. Nor would the system operate satisfactorily in the case of questions of true moment and urgency.

Somewhat less open to objection is the suggestion that the answers to all questions should, instead of being given in the House, be printed with

the votes. Formerly, and not many years ago, the questions used to be read out in the House as even now are all the answers. At present they are asked by reference to their number on the paper. It has lately been urged with some force that this principle should be extended, and the replies printed side by side with the questions. This would probably be a sufficient and satisfactory method with regard to all but a few questions of really national importance. To these, and to these only, a verbal reply in the hearing of the House is still desirable.

It appears therefore to be worth consideration whether a division of questions into two classes, those to be answered by word of mouth, and those to be answered in print, could be devised which would be satisfactory to the House and conduce to a saving of public time. It might, for instance, be possible to limit the right to a verbal answer to Privy Councillors. The House of Commons recognises in more ways than one the status of Privy Councillor. At moments of supreme consequence, such for instance as the demise of the Crown, the functions of Privy Councillors are of great Constitutional importance, and it is no mere fiction that they have a responsibility in regard to public affairs, which differs from that of an ordinary member of either House of Parliament. There are Privy Councillors on both sides of the House of Commons who do not sit on the front benches. They are men selected for a duty, which is not in theory and ought not to be in fact a sinecure, in consequence of their experience, their judgment, and the high position they occupy in the House and before the country. They might safely be entrusted with the responsibility of questioning Ministers on matters of Imperial interest, and the replies they

receive might with advantage to Parliament and the community be delivered from the floor of the House. Such a system would not operate to the detriment of the ordinary member. If he had good reason to be dissatisfied with any answer given in print to a question, it would not be difficult for him to find a Privy Councillor willing to ask for supplementary information. It would not operate to the disadvantage of the House, which would obtain all the knowledge it acquires now at a far less expenditure of time. It would in no way injure the public, to whom the answers given would be every whit as accessible as they are at present, and in some respects more so; and though it would impose a certain burden on Privy Councillors, that burden would not be heavy, nor one which they ought to decline to bear as a condition of enhanced rank and consideration. By such a system the front Opposition bench would be enabled to put, and hear the answers to, all questions necessary for the discharge of a duty of great constitutional value, the importance of which has scarcely been sufficiently recognised during the last few years, and the increased neglect of which would be a grave public evil. Whatever use is derivable from these answers would be greatly augmented from the fact of their standing out clearly and conspicuously, instead of being overwhelmed in a flood of verbiage. Questions of real public interest, but not required for the purposes of front bench Opposition, could be put by Privy Councillors on either side of the House. The undistinguishable mass of questions put now by ordinary members, not of course because they desire either to waste time or to bring themselves into temporary prominence, but because they have a public-spirited and genuine desire to ascertain facts,

could be answered in print to the full satisfaction of the country, and it is to be hoped of the honourable members themselves. The constituencies would have the satisfaction, if satisfaction there be, of knowing that their watchful member had shown laudable interest in the wards of Kerry work-houses or the lavatories of Highland railway-stations, and had not failed to keep the Legislature informed with regard to the fall of a roof in Tipperary or an accident to a fishing-boat in Skye. And the readers of distant newspapers would be furnished with a printed list of questions and answers on most favourable conditions and at little expense.

An alternative might be found in a division of the questions put down into the two categories by some competent authority acting under instructions of the House; but it would not be easy to fix upon the authority. It is not a duty which it would be reasonable to ask the Speaker himself to undertake, still less is it one which could properly be entrusted to the clerks at the table or to officers of the House however trustworthy and distinguished. The establishment of a standing committee for the purpose, of a nature somewhat similar to that of the committee of selection, is a possible solution, but the duties devolved upon such a committee would be incessant, very irksome, and highly invidious. It would be preferable, therefore, if some automatically acting remedy could be found for that which the leader of the House has admitted to be an abuse, and which therefore cannot be allowed to continue or to grow without grave risk to the prestige and influence of Parliament.

The abuse of questions is not, however, the only one which causes alarm to the friends and admirers of the Mother of Free Parliaments. The

action of certain members of the House of Commons, not belonging to one section only, seems to be difficult to explain save upon the theory that they think it a duty to the public to oppose every possible impediment to the conduct of business which the responsible Government of the day brings forward. The rules of the House are framed upon the wise and proper principle that every opportunity should be given for reasonable discussion, and that minorities should be freely allowed to press honest and conscientious objections, and when necessary press them to a division. But those rules can only work satisfactorily if the discussion is reasonable and the objections are not unduly reiterated. The good sense of the House in past times sufficed, while safeguarding the rights and interests of minorities, to safeguard those of majorities also. It would be difficult to argue that it does so now.

Every stage of Government business is not only debated until the application of the closure becomes absolutely necessary; but division after division is insisted upon when there is no doubt whatever of the result, when no special protest is necessary or even contemplated, and when absolutely the only effect produced is the consumption of very valuable time, valuable not merely to the House itself but also to the country at large. Nor is there the slightest disposition shown to acquiesce in one decision. Over and over again three divisions have been necessary when the sense of the House is practically, though not technically, ascertainable by one. Frequently, upon some amendment not embodying any matter of great principle or high importance, a comparatively small minority have forced



divisions, upon the closure, upon the amendment, and upon the main question. Technically the three issues differ; but it is impossible to maintain that the sense of the House can only be ascertained by dividing it three times, or that those who bowed to a decision once given, instead of insisting on its repetition, could be accused of neglecting any duties of protest or opposition which it behoved them in the interests of the community or their constituencies to discharge.

Advantage is taken of every form of the procedure of the House to reiterate debate, and impede progress. Stages which not many years ago were regarded as formal, and were dealt with as affording an opportunity for discussion under purely exceptional circumstances, are treated now as normal occasions for talk. For instance, the third reading of the Appropriation Bill, a measure which is necessary to wind up the financial arrangements of the period with which it deals, may technically be used as an opportunity for debating any subject. It is useful that it should be so, and that a final chance should be given to the House of dealing with any emergency or any matter of grave moment, inadequately discussed at other times. But on March 28th the House of Commons talked about the third reading of an Appropriation Bill for seven hours and a half. Shortly after half-past twelve the closure was moved and carried by one hundred and sixty-seven to sixty-five. This division did not, however, satisfy the opponents, not of the measure but of the Government. So another division was made necessary in which forty-seven members, with a full sense of their responsibilities and a high appreciation of the credit and influence of the Assembly in which they were sitting, made one

more effort to thwart what was clearly the will of the House, and were beaten by a majority of nearly four to one. The debate itself was distinguished by an exchange of acute personal criticism between the two front benches, and by a repetition of remonstrances and arguments most of which had been heard before. It is difficult indeed to resist the feeling that by such a procedure an amount of regard is given to the privileges and rights of a minority which does not conduce to the reasonable and proper progress of business, and does not enhance the reputation or power of the Assembly in which it takes place.

On Tuesday morning, March the 26th, the House of Commons rose at a quarter to five. The sitting was described by a journal so cautious and free from temptation to exaggerate as *THE PALL MALL GAZETTE*, in a leading article headed "Jabber," as a "waste of the small hours in absolute puerilities," and a "tale of purposeless chatter." Even those who hold, and desire to go on holding that the House of Commons is the embodiment of all that is admirable in our Constitution, and wish to regard it with a respect and admiration amounting almost to reverence, will hesitate to deny that the debate might with absolute advantage have ended five hours before it did. Small talk in the small hours may do very well in some societies, but the House of Commons cannot indulge in it without risk.

On an earlier occasion in the present session the House sat till six in the morning, discussing a disciplinary rule made necessary by the determined action of a limited number of members who successfully resisted the will of the House until it was supported by the application of physical force. The rule was important enough to justify careful debate: it

imposed a penalty of serious effect ; but all that there was to be said for and against it had been said long before it was carried, after the application of the closure, by an overwhelming majority. Of the debate two characteristics are prominent. The condemnation of the extreme policy of protest which caused the intrusion of armed men into the House was by no means as general as it might have been, and as it would have been in the earlier days of the Reformed Parliament ; and to the prolongation of the debate more than one section of the House contributed. The unrestrainable performance indeed of one member led to a considerable consumption of time in discussing and dividing upon a proposal which was hopeless from its inception. The sitting generally afforded an excellent instance of that tendency to garrulity the growth of which is becoming a dangerous factor in public affairs.

An attempt has been made to urge that in encouraging the prolongation of debate the House is merely making a reasonable remonstrance against curtailment of the opportunities and privileges of private members, and against encroachment by the Government upon the hours available for business. Facts, however, weigh heavily against such a contention. At the opening of every session the debate on the address in answer to the speech from the Throne is used to the full by private members for airing their views upon every conceivable topic. They find another opportunity in the introduction of the supplementary estimates which the administration of a vast Empire makes almost inevitable. Wednesdays are at their service for attempts at legislation, and the talk on Wednesdays is as voluminous as it is on the other days of the week. Every day, under the guise of questions, private members

find ample occasion not perhaps for advancing any business which they have at heart, but for making prominent the views which they entertain. On Thursdays, when Thursdays are open, academical debates on matters if not of minor, certainly not of supreme, moment, drag along their weary length until, as frequently happens, they are cut short by a count. Meanwhile the Government are compelled to resort to frequent applications of the closure if they wish to make any progress at all, not only with legislative business which is desirable, but with financial business which is essential. If there be undue curtailment of opportunity, any careful observer of what goes on in the House will, if his partiality be not influenced by bias, be obliged to find that it is the powers of the Government, rather than the privileges of private members, which are limited.

In the present session the progress hitherto made in legislation by the Government has been so infinitesimal as to be scarcely worth notice ; of the measures referred to in the King's speech no single one had at Easter reached a second reading. The comparatively greater success which has attended the efforts of private members is no matter for regret ; there are many subjects in regard to which legislation is more advantageously undertaken by private members than legislation emanating from either front bench. What is to be regretted is that a Government so recently returned to power by a preponderating majority should find itself impeded and hampered in its proposals. With regard to the two classes of bills it might well be said to the House, these you ought to have done and not left the others undone. Assuredly the justification for garrulity cannot be found in any undue absorption

by Ministers of the time of private members.

It must not be forgotten in any examination of the position of the House of Commons that in regard to such a question as the prestige and influence of the Legislature public opinion in this country forms itself slowly, but when once formed acts very rapidly. Belief in the House of Commons is thoroughly ingrained in the minds of nine men out of every ten in Great Britain who take interest in public affairs. Were it not so, adverse criticism might ere now have made itself felt; but as men smile complacently at the vagaries of a trusted and skittish favourite, so the public and the Constituencies have hitherto regarded with tolerance, though not perhaps with approval, symptoms of departure from the methods which have made the House of Commons as admired as it is beloved. A change in this attitude would probably not make itself felt at all until it made itself felt with crushing and irretrievable consequence. Through six centuries of success the House of Commons has slowly and with painful perseverance risen to a very high eminence; were it to reach and pass the summit it would, like any other vehicle, go down hill more rapidly than it rose.

In the April number of *THE NINETEENTH CENTURY* Sir Wemyss Reid places among the most prominent of public features which show that the times are out of joint the "decay in reputation and influence" of the House of Commons. Sir Wemyss Reid would probably not claim to be classed among extravagant admirers of the present Parliament; but his political bias does not prevent him from being a Constitutionalist, and a critic of our chief institutions whose opinions are in the abstract entitled to respect. If he is heard to say

that, "It is impossible for thinking men to close their eyes to the fact that our Parliamentary institutions are being tried . . . and the results of the trial, as far as they are visible, are far from being satisfactory," or that, "the steady and swift decline in the influence of the Representative Chamber is due to more insidious and deadly causes than the turbulent obstructiveness of a few members from Ireland,"—we may value his testimony to the existence of the phenomenon on which he comments, without necessarily accepting his explanation of the causes which have led to it. At any rate, the mere fact that such things are said is enough to give pause to all firm believers in the principle of Representative Government, and induce them to cherish a devout hope that, without distinction of party, men of influence in the House of Commons will think it their duty to carefully consider whether the present progress of that Assembly is in the right direction.

Without distinction of party, I say, for both sides of the House, and indeed all sections are interested in the maintenance of its high and honourable position. Even those who have shown signs of a disposition to flout it as incompetent, and a desire to leave it as alien, have more to obtain from a trusted and powerful than from a weak and discredited Chamber. The front Opposition bench, and such as are open to its influence, cannot, without throwing over those principles of confidence in popular representation which they have ever claimed to cherish, successfully make use of minor manœuvres in order to permanently oppose its will. They cannot say we will strain every effort, and employ every weapon, in order to prevent the perfection of all legislative proposals brought forward by our opponents, without

imperilling that reliance on the voice of the people which they have always put forward as the one sound principle of government. Those again, if any such there be, who secretly rejoice when the House of Commons does nothing but says a good deal, because they consider it best for the interests of the country that nothing should be done, will find that they have paid a very heavy price for inaction if they thereby reduce the House of Commons from the high level it now occupies in the public estimation.

The present House of Commons is eminently capable of preventing its own decay, even of strengthening its own position. A Speaker, whose weight, knowledge, and discretion have never been surpassed, occupies the Chair. On the benches of each side of the House, the front benches as well as those behind them, are men of great parliamentary experience and wide constitutional judgment. The

fact that there are few public problems upon which there is union either on one side of the House or the other, does not militate against the supposition that for one such problem both sides may combine to find a solution. Heaven help this country if Parliament should fall into contempt! There is nothing to take its place were it ever to become senile. On the other hand Imperial considerations make its rise to even wider influence than it has yet attained more desirable than its fall. The problem is vastly difficult in itself, and, like all problems affected by acute personal complications, is more difficult in its surroundings. It devolves upon those who wield any power to take steps for grappling with it, before the country in its discontent makes a solution imperative, or the development of circumstances makes a solution unnecessary.

URBANUS.